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CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS OF THE SECOND CENTURY

The Hulsean Prize Essay, 1917

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

OF THE

SECOND CENTURY

In their Relation to Modern Thought

BY

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"Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 COR. x. 5.

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LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1921

25945

PREFACE

THE delay in the publication of this little work needs apology; it is due to the illness of the author, and his return to a bookless land. I wish to express my thanks to the Rev. Canon J. R. Wilford, B.D., of College House, Christchurch, without whose help it would have been hard to overcome the latter difficulty; also to the Rev. H. C. Money, of Christ Church, Glasgow, who has kindly consented to read the proofs; also to the Rev. J. O. F. Murray, D.D., Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and to the Rev. Professor V. H. Stanton, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, for kindly and practical sympathy.

The book itself does not in any sense claim to be a learned book; it is only the product of elementary theological training combined with a sympathetic reading of the literature of the period—which is not large. The title, "Apologetics" rather than "Apologists," left it open to treat the subject in a general manner: and it has only been possible to make a few scattered remarks on what is a vast field of knowledge.

PHILIP CARRINGTON.

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION,
THE DEANERY, CHRISTCHURCH,
NEW ZEALAND.

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CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS OF THE SECOND CENTURY

CHAPTER I

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—*The Acts of the Apostles* xi. 26.

"But if ye suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God in this name."—*The First Epistle of St. Peter* iv. 14.

"And these men, who were hated for their immoralities, were called by the common people Christians."—TACITUS: *Annals*, xv. 44.

"I found nothing but a degrading and extravagant superstition. So I deferred the trial and hastened to consult you; for I thought the matter worthy of your consideration, especially because of the number of the accused. For many of every age and rank and even of both sexes are being accused, or are on the point of being accused; and the plague has overrun not only cities, but villages and countryside. . . . And I felt considerable doubt whether there should be any discrimination of age, or whether the weak should be differently treated from the strong; whether the penitent should be pardoned, or whether it should be any advantage for a thorough Christian to recant; whether the bare 'name' (without immorality) should be punished, or the immoralities which go along with the 'name.'"—PLINY: *Ep.* 96, *To Trajan.*

Answer: "They are not to be sought out: if they should be brought up and convicted they must be punished, provided that whoever denies he is a Christian and proves it by his actions, that is, by worshipping our gods, although suspect in the past, shall have pardon on his penitence. Anonymous accusations should not be received in any case; it would be a bad precedent and unworthy of our age."—TRAJAN: *Ep.* 97, *To Pliny.*

"O perplexity between reasons of state and justice! He declares us to be innocent by forbidding us to be searched after, and at the same time commands us to be punished as criminals. What a mass of kindness and cruelty, connivance and punishment is here confounded

in one act! You condemn him therefore when brought whom the laws forbid to be sought out."—TERTULLIAN: *Apology II.*

"The bare application of a name without any fact falling under that name is looked upon as neither good nor evil; but as for our name, which is tantamount to a crime against a Christian, if we are tried upon that article we must certainly be acquitted as very good men. For we are indicted by the name 'Christian'; now, 'chrestos' is a word for 'kind' or 'good,' and such a word, surely, cannot be a just foundation for hatred."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology I*, 4.

"Then the air and all that is under heaven is in a certain sort anointed by light and spirit; and are you unwilling to be anointed ('christos') with the oil of God? Wherefore we are called Christians on this account, because we are 'anointed' with the oil of God."—THEOPHILUS: *To Autolycus*, i. 12.

I. THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF CHRISTIANITY

THE most difficult problem which lay before Roman statesmanship when the Empire was established was that of Jewish nationality. Not only was there the Jewish Kingdom itself, situated on the most dangerous border of the Empire, but little colonies of Jews had spread far and wide through the world, farther even than the Roman arms. Personally they were detestable; their commercial power was enormous; and a successful rebellion in alliance with the Parthians was by no means an impossibility. Further, in spite of their manifest inferiority in the arts of peace and war, they regarded their nation, their city, and their law as being as far above Rome as Rome thought herself above the barbarians.

What made them so difficult to manage was the independence of their national and religious life. Every other nation was content to enter the great association of nations, and let its gods take their seats in the imperial pantheon. The Jewish God refused to leave Mount Sion; and before His face the gods of the nations were so much brass or stone. To the philosopher this

was, perhaps, immaterial; to the statesman it was a serious matter. If the Jewish God demanded this supreme place in the heavens, it could only lead to the Jewish nation demanding, and fighting for, the same supremacy in Mediterranean politics. And, as a matter of fact, some such war of liberation was continually breaking out. Further, every patriotic Jew expected his God to come down, destroy the world, and set up the last empire at Jerusalem. In this Day of the Lord only the holy "people," the "law," and the temple would remain.

The historical inspiration for this hope was found in the days of David, when the great empires had become exhausted and Israel had obtained a temporary ascendancy that stretched from Egypt to the Euphrates. The Jews believed that, by virtue of His covenant with His people, Jehovah was bound to restore to them this Kingdom both as a reward to them and as a justification of Himself. But the failure of the Maccabean dynasty had profoundly modified this hope, and many religious people doubted whether this sinful earth was a fitting scene for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Thus it came about that a great majority expected the Day to appear with destruction at the end of the world in which God would send His Anointed (Christ), no mere man, but the heavenly "Son of Man," to re-establish the Empire of David. The person and office of this "Christ" were both vague; but when He came, He was to "redeem" Israel, that is liberate it from the Roman yoke, and in His person fulfil the words of the prophets. In this *dénouement* would be seen by all the justification of the creation of the world, and the consummation of the ages. It was this revelation for which the whole creation groaned and travailed.

There were false Christs sometimes, who raised armies to enforce their claims to the Davidic throne:

the Galilean peasantry among whom they had their chief success were strong, simple, independent men with an inherited passion for liberty. When roused in this way they fought with the fanaticism and fury of dervishes, and the rebellions had to be put down with the vast and incredible cruelties told us by Josephus ; the sight of burning villages, and at one time as many as two thousand crucifixions, must have taught the young Jesus, even in His boyhood, that He must carry His cross along the road to Messiahship. But such measures are always apt to increase the revolutionary passions they attempt to crush. A far more satisfactory policy of the Romans was the *entente* with the House of Herod, an enlightened prince who had been educated at Rome, and with the Sadducees, the priestly but sceptical rulers in Jerusalem.

Tertullian says that Tiberius proposed to the Senate that Christ should be enrolled among the number of the gods, and that, failing this, he issued severe penalties against all who should accuse the worshippers of Christ. Tertullian is careless and wild, perhaps, in his use of authority, but he is not likely, in a petition to the Emperor, to refer to imperial records that do not exist. The use of the word " Christ " suggests that it was not Jesus, crucified and risen, whom Tiberius wished to deify, but the expected Messiah in whose name all these rebellions occurred. At any rate, it became the Roman policy not to interfere with the religion of the Jews ; and it was left to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem and to the synagogue authorities elsewhere (Acts ix. 2), to exercise powers of discipline and punishment in religious disputes. Is this perhaps the clue to the scene before Gallio at Corinth ? The proconsul rules that the matter at issue is one for the synagogue to decide, thereby recognising Paul's (Gentile) Christians as a kind of Jew. The Greek Christians then find they

are in a majority in the synagogue, and judicial sentence [1] is passed on Sosthenes as on other occasions on Paul himself (2 Cor. xi. 24).

But, if the Romans left the Jews to decide their own religious questions, they were doubly alert to catch any signs of political activity or rebellion. We can see how fiercely the light beat upon our Lord's life, and how careful He had to be not to make any reference which could possibly have a political meaning. This must be one of the reasons why He delayed to claim the title "Christ" and then did so secretly. Long before they ever heard of Him, the "Name" may have been known to the Romans; and the term "Christian" can have signified to them nothing but rebellion. We must remember that, although to us the Roman Empire is almost synonymous with stability, it was then only an experiment. The Jews had seen many empires rise and fall, and there was no apparent reason for the permanence of this one. Indeed, at the death of Nero, it must have seemed in a very serious condition.

The first half of the century saw great Messianic agitation: the Jews, continually travelling about, carried from place to place the seeds of the new hope. The Order founded by John the Baptist powerfully influenced the rank and file of Judaism; we hear of it in Alexandria, and in Ephesus twenty years later; and the fourth Gospel may have these Johannine Jews in mind. They continue to be mentioned as a Jewish sect far into the second century. We learn from Suetonius that there were riots at Rome "at the instigation of Chrestus," in consequence of which the Jews were banished from the city. It seems natural to suppose that these riots were connected with the Christians, owing to the fact that we find Aquila and Prisca among the exiles at Corinth, while the accusations made at Philippi that

[1] Acts xviii. 17 does not say it was Gallio's judgment-seat.

they were " turning the world upside down " probably refer to the same events in Rome, or at any rate to something more important than the local preaching of Paul, for Philippi was on the great road eastward from Rome. And if it be true that the word " Christ " had this political connotation, it seems reasonable to suppose that a similar scene lies behind the statement that the brethren were called Christians first in Antioch.

To the Roman world, Christianity first appeared as a part of this vast movement: it can have been distinguished neither from Judaism nor from the crudest Messianism. The Acts of the Apostles represents this period, when the Church was regarded as a party among the liberal and revolutionary Jews; and it was the conservative party among their own community—called by St. John simply " the Jews "—who were the first persecutors. They could not long remain under the protection of such unwilling guardians; and, even if the Romans included them under their benevolent Jewish policy, neither the Jews themselves nor the Roman people were so kindly disposed. Popular riots, often engineered by the Jews, were the second form of persecution which the Christians had to face.

The mob was their second great enemy. In the first place, the Jews were probably only too glad to see diverted on to the heads of others the unpopularity which they themselves had won as foreigners and followers of strange superstitions. But what must have brought the trouble to a head was the large number of conversions from paganism. It was bad enough to practise horrible superstitions; but proselytism was unforgivable—a proselytism, that is, which demanded that the converts should renounce the gods of their own country, and anathematise them as devils. When this " atheism " began to assume threatening proportions, people grew alarmed.

Popular fury is easily roused against anything iconoclastic; and it is quite easy to understand the fury roused by the spread of this intolerant religion. Not only did they anathematise the gods of their country and the divine emperor, but they taught others to do the same; they were godless, atheists, treasonable. They were a confederacy of slaves and women, plotting to overthrow our lord god the emperor, and divine Rome. They led off honest men and women to their "love" feasts—the word "agape" is unfortunate—and there the most scandalous orgies were held. St. Paul's picture of the uninitiated outsider entering a Christian meeting-house (1 Cor. xiv. 23 ff.) gives us a little glimpse of what an outsider must have thought of the pentecostal gift. Besides, there were stories darker than this. The early Christian idea of what is now called platonic love gave rise to the basest insinuations; and the language used about the carefully guarded mystery of the Holy Eucharist led to a common belief that they met together to eat a murdered child, a rite connected with witchcraft.

There was sufficient evidence, too, to afford grounds for a belief in revolutionary tendencies. The actual communism of Jerusalem, the virtual communism of every tiny *ecclesia*, and the new social morality were the outstanding features of the faith. Of all the gospel passages, the ones that seem to have left their deepest impress on the works of the earliest writers are the Sermon on the Mount and its like. And the belief in the destruction of the world and the establishment of a new Empire on these lines was in the very forefront of the gospel message. Besides, we must remember the existence of extremists of an irresponsible type, who needed the apostolic warnings to be sober, and to work, and to submit to legitimate authority. There was obviously much revolutionary excitement on the extreme left.

Thus we get the popular riots like those at Ephesus or Rome. An irritating trait in the Christians was their condemnation of the wonderful temples and images of the Empire; and in the case of Ephesus we see the hierarchy and those who made their living out of the temples engineering the riot partly, of course, from motives of self-interest, but partly for the honour of the goddess whom "all the world reverences." In a word, the Christians had made themselves thoroughly unpopular with their secret society, their mysterious rites and doctrines, and their slaves who thought themselves as good as their masters, breaking up family life and undermining the whole fabric of society. Many must have been the occasions on which a brother suffered shame for the "name" of Christian, hurled at him abusively by the mob; and many must have been the Pilates who allowed a mad mob to have its way—thus, no doubt, perished the faithful martyr Antipas. And finally Cæsar himself, yielding to the people and the Jews, allowed a spectacular massacre of Christians at Rome, so long and so bloody that a reaction of pity ensued even in the hearts of the shallow Italian mob. So far, however, there seems to have been no official suppression of the new society.

Meanwhile the theory of the supreme God at Jerusalem was working out to the logical catastrophe. It was impossible for a deified Emperor in Rome to own as his vassal the Ancient of Days. It had to be fought out one way or another. Jerusalem was burned to the ground after the siege in 71, and was finally re-established in 135 as a heathen city; in that year came the final defeat of the last extremist Jews under Bar-Kokhabh. As long as the God of the Jews lived in a citadel at Jerusalem, He was dangerous; so soon as He became a purely religious conception He was harmless, and the Jews were allowed to continue the worship and discipline

of the synagogue. But during these years the Romans had made the discovery that the Christians were a distinct body; Aristides can write: "This is plain to you, O King, that there are four races of men in the world: Barbarians and Greeks, Jews and Christians." (Syriac Version).

Gibbon suggests that this discovery was made when the Jewish temple-tax was converted to the upkeep of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and that the collection of this tax would certainly bring out the distinction amd make it final. But, in any case, the Christian had been bound to dissociate himself from the Jewish policy when it came to fighting for the temple. On the one hand, Jesus had foretold the destruction of the temple, perhaps connecting it with Himself; on the other hand, Christianity was the very opposite of an armed nationalism. The Christians, therefore, when they saw the signs, fled to the mountains. But while the status of the Jew after the war was quite satisfactory, that of the Christian was a puzzle; he had no nation, and therefore no *locus standi*. As a society, the existence of Christianity was indefensible in an Empire which forbade all societies. "Non licet esse vos" (You have no right to be) was the verdict of the law. But, when it came to the point, and it was found, after due inquiry, that the society was revolutionary, that it was secret and atheistic, and that it refused the oath of allegiance to the divine Emperor, it became obvious that it could not be allowed to continue. Its members were enemies of the human race, and the magnitude of their conspiracy was the measure of the fear which it inspired. Yet no steps were taken to root it up, or even to seek out its members; only if information were laid, or if there were a popular outburst (as in the case of St. Polycarp) the officials were bound to act, very often, it seems, with great

reluctance; for they had sooner or later to recognise that the Christians were their best subjects. This then is the way in which Christianity came into conflict with the Empire; it was as a political development, as a society, as an *imperium in imperio*, that its existence was felt to be impossible: and an "apology" is an attempt to defend Christianity in this conflict. Yet the apologists never do defend it solely on these grounds; for, though Christianity does appear as an organised society, yet its foundation is not political. Its foundation is a certain faith in God, which the apologists felt to be closely related to the philosophy of the day, so that, in their defence of Christianity, it is the statement of this point of view which is their first care, though the question of how it works itself out in organised human society is of no less importance. To the philosophers they mainly address themselves; and among these we must count not only Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius, but the Emperors Hadrian and Antoninus. We must remember that it is with the practical philosophy of the Empire, and not with the speculative philosophy of Hellas, that they are dealing. Among the philosophers were found those who, to-day, would be called the religious men, the artists in conduct, experts in man's relation to the universe.

The relation between the Christian ideal and the philosophic ideal of the second century has been well depicted by Dr. E. A. Abbott in *Silanus the Christian.* The Stoicism of Epictetus, tinged as it was a very little with adventure or romance, becomes almost warm and attractive. *Rex sapiens:* the wise man is a king; he looks at everything with fearless eyes, and sees it as it is; life holds no illusions or terrors for him; he remains totally master of himself; no passion or emotion can stir his soul. He is like God, the divine Logos, impassible, eternal, who pervades and upholds the universe,

from whom comes his spark of soul, to whom it returns. In contrast with this ideal, the zeal of St. Paul must have appeared hysterical and unmanly. To rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep, was no part of the Stoic discipline. "You have lost your son," said a friend to a philosopher of old. "I did not think I had begotten an immortal," was the reply. When the ideal man loses his humanity like this, we can understand how a warmer heart would turn for comfort to the spirit of the Gospel. And this is exactly what happened, for instance, in the case of St. Justin. But it had to be a complete turn round; no Stoic philosopher could expect his stony deity to assume such warm and human flesh as did the Logos of St. John. The One Eternal would never become a village carpenter, suffer, be insulted, and die. And his ideal man would never weep, sigh, and be weary, or pass through the agony of the garden. For such a God, the philosopher would have nothing but scorn; to him, the supreme virtue was not humility, but dignity. Humiliation did not mature, it marred the perfect stature of a man.

Marcus Aurelius, the emperor-philosopher, must have known something of Christianity; yet he could calmly approve, if he did not order, the horrible martyrdoms of Lyons and Vienne. And it was his philosophy that nerved him to do without a tremor that from which the vicious but easy-going Commodus shrank; he would probably have suffered the same torments as calmly as he ordered them. His only reference to the Christians is a comparison of their indecent glee in martyrdom with the seemly composure of the dying Stoic.

Again, to the philosopher, the ignoble origin of Christianity would be sufficient to discredit it. Not only was it current among slaves and women, who, rightly

speaking, were not human souls at all; but it had risen among these pestilent Jews, a superstitious and unreasonable people, quite devoid of philosophy. It is true there is a humaner spirit in the philosophy of the second century than in any that went before (despite isolated pronouncements on slavery, for instance, by men like Agatho); but its conscious connection with Christian writings or teaching must be left an open question: the spirit of Marcus or Epictetus is not such as to suggest that they would have read barbarous works like those of Paul. The resemblance must not be put down to direct cause and effect.

Yet the apologists felt, and rightly too, that they had more in common with philosophy than with any other movement in the Empire; they not only joined them in the province of conduct, the province to which philosophy had been more or less limiting itself, but also explored the length and breadth of those unknown lands through which the earlier speculators and physicists had driven a few roads. But, in spite of this undoubted affinity, the Christian Church found herself in deadly opposition to the philosopher when Plato's words came true, and the philosopher was king. The divine titles were given by the Church, not to him, but to the crucified Galilean; He was Lord, Master, God and Saviour. And in her efforts to explain this opposition, the Church was driven to explain her existence, her history, her philosophy, her belief, her politic; and, what she could not explain, the new faith in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER II

THE CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

"It is clear to us, O King, that there are three orders of mankind in this world; these are, the worshippers of your alleged gods, the Jews, and the Christians."—ARISTIDES: *Apology II.*

"To the Emperor Titus Ælius Adrianus Antoninus, Pius Augustus Cæsar and to his son Verissimus the philosopher, and to Lucius the philosopher, the natural son of Cæsar, but the adopted of Pius the lover of learning; and to the sacred Senate, and to all the people of Rome, in behalf of men of all ranks and nations unjustly loaded with public odium and oppression, I, Justin the son of Priscus and grandson of Bacchius, natives of Flavia Neapolis and Palestine, Syria, I who am one of the suffering multitude, humbly offer this apology."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology I*, i.

"Romans, the things which have recently happened in your city under Urbicus, and the things which are also being everywhere unreasonably done by our governors, have compelled me to frame this composition for your sakes, who are men of like passions, and brethren, though ye know it not, and though you be unwilling to acknowledge it on account of your glorying in what you esteem dignities."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology II*, i.

"To the Emperors, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and, more than all, philosophers."—ATHENAGORAS: *Embassy*, i.

"A fluent tongue and an elegant style afford pleasure, and such praise as vain glory delights in, to wretched men who have been corrupted in mind; the lover of truth does not give heed to ornamented speeches, but examines the real matter of speech, what it is, and what kind it is."—THEOPHILUS: *To Autolycus*, i.

"Be not, O Greeks, so very hostilely disposed towards the barbarians, nor look with ill-will on their opinions; for which of your institutions has not been derived from the barbarians?"—TATIAN: *To the Greeks*, i.

"When I consider, and call to mind my remembrance of Octavius, my excellent and most faithful companion, the sweetness and charm

of the man so clings to me that I appear to myself in some sort as if I were returning to times past, and not only recalling to memory things which happened long ago and are now gone."—MINUCIUS FELIX: *Octavius*, i.

"If you, the guardians of the Roman Empire, presiding in the eye of the city, for the administration of public justice; if you must not examine the Christian cause and give it a fair hearing in open court; if the Christian cause is the only cause which your lordships either fear or blush to be concerned for in public; or, lastly, if your odium to this sect has been too much fermented by your late severities at home upon your Christian servants and you bring this domestic ferment into the courts of judicature; if these, I say, are the bars in the way to justice, be pleased at least to tolerate thus far, to let truth wait upon you in private, and to read the apology we are not suffered to speak."—TERTULLIAN: *Apology*, i.

"Since I see, most excellent Diognetus, that thou hast shown an eager desire to understand the religion of the Christian, . . . I welcome thy zeal, and I pray God, who bestows upon us the power both to speak and to hear, that it may be given to me to speak in such a way that thou mayest be most helped by what thou hearest, and to thee to hear in such a way that he who speaks may have no cause for regret."—*To Diognetus*, i.

II. THE CHAMPIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

WITH the Emperor Trajan and his successors a new era opened for the Roman Empire. The reign of tyranny and suspicion had passed away; Nero and Domitian were now only evil memories. Not only the Christians, but the whole world, rejoiced. The philosophers had suffered under the house of Cæsar much as the Christians had done; now they found the reward of their sufferings, and mounted the throne of the Empire.

Some have claimed Hadrian as the greatest of the Cæsars: it is true he surrendered the conquests Trajan had made in the East; but in this he showed himself a wise administrator. Within the limits of the Empire, so consolidated, he was able to develop a truer peace than Augustus had done, not only by efficient administration and adequate military defence, but by the development of sound principles in law and devotion

to an enlightened philosophy. Roman jurisprudence dates from this period, but it owed its being to the philosophical conception of an equal and universal law applying to all nations. As an example of what was done we may instance Trajan's *Rescript to the Christians*; popular outbursts and anonymous accusations were declared "unworthy of our age"; all proceedings against Christians were to take place through the legitimate channels of the public courts.

There is considerable doubt as to the dates of the first apologies. It seems likely that **Aristides** of Athens addressed himself, not to Hadrian, but to Antoninus Pius, perhaps in Rome about the year 140. A lost apology by **Quadratus** (perhaps Bishop of Athens) must have been earlier. An extract preserved by Eusebius dates it very early indeed.

"But the works of our Saviour were lasting: for they were real. Those who were healed, those who rose from the dead, were seen not only while being cured or while rising, but continued present; not only while the Saviour was with us, but when He had gone, they lived a long time, so that some of them survived even to our own times."

The first apologies were addressed to philosophers, recommending Christianity as the only religion worthy of their consideration. Hadrian is addressed by Aristides as a philosopher rather than a king.

His first chapter deals with the nature of God, the Mover of the World, who has made all for the sake of man. He describes Him as unbegotten, unmade, without beginning or end, without name, likeness, parts or passions . . . perfect, complete, sufficient. "He asks no sacrifice and no libation, nor any of the things that are visible; He asks not anything from anyone;

but all ask from Him." This is non-controversial; the Stoic will agree with him.

The second chapter describes the "four races of men in this world: Barbarians and Greeks, Jews and Christians." The Barbarians come from Kronos and Rhea, the Greeks from Helenus and Zeus, the Jews from Abraham, and the Christians "from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most High." An early baptismal creed is here incorporated, to define Christianity; but, for further particulars, the reader is referred to a written Gospel, which tells how Jesus took flesh of a Hebrew virgin, chose twelve disciples, was pierced by the Jews, died and was buried, rose and ascended into heaven, and how the twelve disciples went out and taught in the known parts of the world. This, except for a reference to the coming judgment, is all he tells about the doctrine of Christianity.

In chapters iii–vii he attacks the "Barbarians," showing how they worship idols, the elements, the sun, and deified men, putting the creation before the Creator. In chapters viii–xi he attacks the "Greeks," who, in spite of their intellectual achievements, worship gods who are both immoral and ridiculous. From these in chapters xii and xiii he turns to the mysteries of Isis, and the other superstitions of Egypt, especially animal-worship. In chapter xiv he commends the Jews because they worship God and not His works, and observe a kindly morality, but they too have gone astray by the service of angels, the observation of sabbaths, new moons, and other such ordinances, "which things not even thus have they perfectly observed."

In these attacks on the non-Christian religions Aristides has much in common with the philosophers, and it is this that forms the main argumentative part of his work. When he comes to recommend Christianity

he does not employ argument, but contents himself with describing the moral life of the "brethren," leaving that picture of love incarnate to exercise its converting influence. Chapter xv begins with an account of how they keep the commandments of God, the Maker of heaven and earth; it begins with the Ten Commandments, but describes them loosely and expands them into the new commandment of love. He describes their philanthropy, their honest and sober life, their care for each other. Chapter xvi describes how they know God and ask from Him petitions which are proper for Him to give and them to receive. He has no doubt that the world stands by reason of the intercession of the Christians. All is coloured by the hope and expectation of the world to come. For "their sayings and their ordinances, and the glory of the service, and the expectation of their reward," the reader is again referred to their writings. Finally, in chapter xvii, he says "their teaching is the gate of light. Let all those then approach thereunto who do not know God . . . let them anticipate the dread judgment which is to come by Jesus Christ upon the whole race of man."

In this primitive apology we see doctrinal and gospel Christianity; but it is not made the subject of argument. There is no reference to the sacraments or ministry of the Church—the whole emphasis is laid on the Christian morality and the worship of God the Creator, and the religions of the day are unmercifully attacked. In this it conforms to the normal type; but it has a tolerant and philosophic calm which is soon lost. The theory that the heathen gods are devils has yet to be developed by St. Justin, and a philosophic argument laid down to support the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. This is the second stage of the argument with the philosophers, and it is made more

bitter by the fact that the Christians were persecuted by the philosophers just as they had been by the Cæsars. Even Marcus Aurelius, who surrounded himself with philosophers and professors of renunciation, was a persecutor of the Church.

St. Justin's Apologies ring with real indignation against the persecution of the innocent.

(Chapters i–xv.) The *First Apology* of St. Justin is addressed to Antoninus Pius, "and to his son, Verissimus the philosopher, and to Lucius the philosopher." Philosophers, he says, ought to be lovers of truth, and not condemn the innocent. Christians do not fear investigation; they demand it. For the persecution of Christians, like the persecution of Socrates, comes of the devils. They are called atheists because they refuse to worship these devils; but they worship God, who is Father, Son, and Spirit. They are not evildoers; for, like Plato, they look forward to a judgment. They cannot worship idols; but turn to the living and true God, who made the world for men. Again, they do expect a kingdom, as their enemies allege; but not an earthly one. They are the best of citizens, because they always act as if in God's presence. And yet their Master prophesied these very sufferings as a result of their goodness.

(Chapter xvi–xxvi.) After this general plea St. Justin passes to a description and justification of the Christian religion, which he reveals far more fully than any other writer—chapters xvi–xxiii deal with the moral teaching of Jesus, based mainly on St. Matthew's Gospel, xxiv and xxvi emphasise the bodily nature of the Resurrection.

(Chapters xxvii–xxxvii.) A comparison is then instituted with the religions and customs of the pagan world, showing how much more fantastic beliefs go unpunished, and how the immoralities attributed to the

Christians are small compared with those actually found among the pagans.

(Chapters xxxviii–lxxviii.) St. Justin then develops his main line of argument for the truth of the Christian religion, the argument from prophecy. The birth, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ had been foretold by the Spirit through the prophets, and references are given for every detail. He also says that Greek mythology and philosophy were based on these prophecies: the former at least through the agency of devils. "But here the devils were mistaken in not having one of Jupiter's sons crucified in imitation of Christ."

The last section (lxxix. to end) deals with the Church and the Christian way of life, revealing more than any other apologist. After fasting and penitence, the converts are regenerated by baptism in the name of the Trinity; for Christ has said, "Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." By this they obtain remission of their sins, and it is also called illumination. There are traces of a baptismal creed. This sacrament also has been copied by the devils. Then follows a digression on the doctrine of the Logos in the Old Testament.

In chapter lxxxv follows an account of the prayers and the Eucharist. Bread, with a cup of wine and water, is brought to the president, who takes it and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of His Son and the Holy Spirit: "and this prayer to God . . . is a prayer of no ordinary length. When the bishop has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present conclude with an audible voice, saying Amen. . . . Those we call deacons distribute to everyone present to share in this eucharistic bread and wine and water, and they carry it to the absent. . . . We do not take this as common bread and wine; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour was made

flesh . . . so are we taught that this food is turned into the nourishment and substance of our flesh and blood, and is in some sense the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus." An account is then given of the reading of the apostolic and prophetic writings at Sunday worship, and of the practice of almsgiving.

St. Justin is not an orderly writer; but such is the main structure of his work. The Logos Doctrine which he uses to explain the Incarnation is often alluded to in it, but is nowhere treated in an orderly manner. Another side of this doctrine is developed in the *Second Apology*, a shorter, less formal, more vigorous work, written on the occasion of the condemnation of two Christians, Ptolemæus and Lucius, by Urbicus the prætor: it is written also partly in answer to the attacks of Crescens, a cynic philosopher. So far chapters i–iii.

(Chapters iv–viii.) God has a purpose for the human race which is being carried out through Christians. But the world has fallen away from that purpose since the time when the angels fell victims to the charms of the daughters of men, from which union were born the demons whom the world worships as gods (cf. *Enoch*, *passim*). God and Jesus, His Son, have powers over these demons. And God has His chosen people, the Christians, for whose sake the world is preserved from inevitable punishment. This is why Christians who are inspired by the Word are persecuted by the world, even as were Heraclitus and other philosophers who were similarly inspired.

(Chapters ix–xiii.) God, since He is just, must in the end punish vice. As the divine Word He was partially known to the writers of old, like Socrates, though not fully revealed till the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Christian contempt of death is bound up with their choice of an innocent life. And this innocence is tri-

umphantly proved by their fearlessness. Not that we differ in all respects from all men, for all writers spoke the truth in proportion as they were inspired by the " Seed of the Word " in them : " Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians."

St. Justin ends by beseeching the Romans—to whom he addresses himself—to make his book public, and so spread the truth about Christianity (chapters xiv–xv).

We now come to **Athenagoras**, also a philosopher, but resident at Athens. We shall find in him also the Enochic myth of the origin of evil, and it is worth noting that this conception was imported into Christianity from the learning—even the science—of the day. He also emphasises the importance of the resurrection of the body. He is more learned, cultured and philosophical than Justin ; and seems absolutely at ease when dealing with the poets and philosophers.

His Apology is addressed to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, " conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and, more than all, philosophers." He begins by complaining that Christians are singled out for unjust treatment. They have a right to common justice. And it is the duty of the state to inquire into the truth of the three charges brought against them : atheism, Thyestean feasts, and Œdipodean intercourse (chapters i–iii).

(Chapters iv–xii.) As to the charge of atheism, we believe in one God, who made all things by the Logos. Poets like Euripides believe in one God. So also philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. Yet they are not persecuted, while we, who have the inspiration of His Spirit, are. This faith has reason on its side, and, in addition, the witness of God Himself speaking through His prophets, Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. We believe, therefore, in one God and one co-eternal Logos, and in

the Holy Spirit flowing from Him and returning back, like the rays from the sun. In accordance with this faith is our moral teaching, "Love your enemies"; and in accordance with our faith is our practice. And therefore it is impossible to regard us as atheists.

(Chapters xiii–xvi.) We now come to the "atheist" charges in detail. We do not sacrifice to God, because He has no need of blood and burnt-offerings; but we do offer the bloodless sacrifice, which is our reasonable service. We do not honour all the gods of all the cities: their multitude and variance makes it impossible. We do not confuse God with matter, and worship idols. We admire the heavens and the elements as works of art, but do not worship them, knowing they are subject to a law of dissolution.

(Chapter xvii–xxx.). The heathen gods were made by men; by such poets as Homer and Hesiod, and such artists as Saurias and Cleanthes. The poets themselves affirm that these gods had a beginning, like men; and the philosophers agree with them. They give these gods the forms of monsters, and attribute to them impure loves, myths for which symbolism supplies no explanation.

If this is so, what power produces the miracles that are done in the name of the idols? Thales divides "superior beings" into "God, demons, and heroes"; and Plato agrees with him. We, too, recognise under God the existence of demons, the product of an unlawful love between angels and women. These beings exercise an evil control over matter, and are responsible for the apparent moral chaos which has led poets and philosophers to deny the existence of Providence. They entice men to the impure worship of idols, and are always about men trying to get the mastery. In their origin the heathen gods were only men, as the poets admit; and, though they may have been good

or strong, we are not atheists because we refuse to worship them.

(Chapters xxxi–xxxvi.) The charges of immorality are hardly likely to be true, considering our belief in the judgment to come, and the future life. Compare the morality of Zeus with ours: "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart." And our morality, celibate or married, is equally pure. How, then, can you heathens accuse us? Similarly, how can you, who delight in the gladiatorial shows, accuse us of cruelty? Finally, our belief in the resurrection of the body—which is fully in accordance with your physics—is the most powerful guardian of morality.

Athenagoras attaches such importance to the argument from the resurrection of the body that he devotes a separate tract to this subject. It will be noted that less stress than ever is laid on the worship and doctrine of Christianity, and more emphasis laid on the main topics of controversy like the origin of evil, the existence of Providence. This is still more remarkable in **Theophilus,** *To Autolycus.* It is worth noting that both Athenagoras and Theophilus ascribe their conversion to the Old Testament.

Book I. First Principles. God is a Spirit, and can only be discerned by the eyes of the soul if the heart is pure. No words can describe Him in His perfection and justice. He is without beginning and without end, the Creator of all things, and can in a limited way be discerned from His works, the seasons and winds and the stars, and the order of them. But we cannot see Him till we put on immortality. You think this faith of ours is unreasonable; but is your worship of immoral gods, of idols, or of kings any more reasonable? We Christians are called so because we are anointed with the Spirit of God. Our faith in the resurrection is

reasonable, because it is in accordance with the observed course of nature. This I learned because I found in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit, and this God which you have asked me to show you.

Book II. The Origin of the World. This book begins by satirising heathen conceptions of deity, not merely the popular beliefs in images and local deities, but the errors of the philosophers in thinking matter co-eternal with God, and of the poets in the making and genealogies of their gods and the divine ruling of the world.

In chapter ix he proceeds to the Christian belief, beginning from the prophets who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. These tell us how God, through His Word, made all things out of nothing. He then gives the history of the world from the Creation to the Flood, and the division of the world among the sons of Noah. All is given in detail, and no occasion is lost of pointing out where these older books correct Homer and Hesiod. Secular history gives no account of these matters; but we find them in the prophets, who also give us the laws of a holy life. He finally shows that the Sibyl, the poets, and the philosophers confirm the account given by the prophets.

Book III. Greek and Hebrew literature contrasted. The Greek writers were later than the Hebrew; and are consequently not reliable. They are self-contradictory, and also inculcate the very crimes of which Christians are falsely accused. They do not agree in their descriptions of the gods, and represent them as immoral. To us God has revealed His nature in the divine law of the Ten Commandments. We also find in the Old Law humanity towards strangers, repentance from evil works, social justice, chastity, and love of enemies. It will be noticed that Theophilus ignores the ceremonial law: to him the Old Testament is a prophetic book.

Greek history is wrong in its chronology, while Hebrew history is accurate because it is inspired by God. He contrasts the myths of Noah and Deucalion, and the truth about Moses with Manetho's inaccuracy. He then goes on to show that the Temple is more ancient than classic civilisation, and that the prophets wrote before the Greek philosophers. The remainder of the book deals with the details of comparative chronology, and ends up by explaining that Greek writers do not deal with Hebrew history, in the first place, because it is of superior antiquity, and in the second because of their frivolous view of moral values.

Theophilus is still sympathetic with philosophy, though not in the whole-hearted manner of St. Justin. In St. Justin's disciple, **Tatian,** we find the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. Tatian is an "Assyrian," and has none of the reverence for Greek thought so natural to a member of the civilised world. His work, *To the Greeks,* is a satire in the manner of Swift: and though it is just as unpardonably savage as *The Tale of a Tub,* it also makes just as good reading.

(Chapters i–x.) Why so proud of your culture, O Greeks? for you learned it all—magic, astronomy, writing, music, everything—from the barbarians; your philosophers are examples of vice and monuments of ridicule. Why, therefore, do you enter into conflict with us who worship God, the invisible Creator? from Him comes forth the Logos. The creation of matter by God is the basis of our belief in the resurrection of the body. Then comes the story of the fall of the angels through the pride of one who thought himself equal to God; this is the origin of demons, the heathen gods who sin like men and give rise to superstition. How ridiculous they all are!

(Chapters xi–xx.) We are not under fate: our sin is the result of our own free will. The spirit in

us is superior to matter; it is immortal, like God, and responsible. It will be punished, though not so severely as the demons. At present, it is necessary for the spirit, while still in her dwelling of flesh, to be united with the Spirit of God. Thus, repudiating matter, the Christian will be unharmed by the demons and their illusive terrors. They pretend to bestow blessing and health; but this is not in their power, but in God's. And to God we must render thanks.

(Chapters xx–xxviii.) Are not the heathen gods ridiculous beside the Christian God? Could anything be more wicked and laughable than the Greek religious rites? Is anything more demoralising than their gladiatorial shows and theatrical performances? Their philosophers are a laughable rabble; their learning is petty pride; and men who believe as they do have no right to condemn the opinions of Christians. Their legislation allows the most unnatural immorality.

(Chapters xxix–xlii.) I had seen all this myself, and was converted from it by reading the simple but great words of the prophets. I was initiated, therefore, and resolved to resist the devil. The doctrine I embraced was far more ancient than that of Greece, and it was a doctrine fitted not only for philosophers, but for young and old, rich and poor, among whom are examples of virtue very different from the heroines of Greek story, to whom statues were erected in every city. I have not learned these things at second-hand; I have visited many lands and seen them myself; and I have chosen the best.

The remaining seven chapters deal with the comparative chronology of Greek and Hebrew history along the same lines as Theophilus, to whom perhaps Tatian, the pupil of Justin, owes part of this extremely original apology. It will be noted that, in Tatian, we have still less about Christian faith and worship. It has still

further narrowed itself down to the main points of controversy.

There are several points of connection between the two Latin apologies; but whether **Minucius** borrowed from Tertullian, or *vice versa*, remains doubtful. In the former case, Minucius cannot belong to the second century, or only just falls within it. There is very little evidence on which to decide this question, and, for completeness' sake it should be included here.

The writer is a disciple of Cicero as well as of Christ. The *Octavius* is written in dialogue form like the *De Amicitia* or the *De Oratore*; and the persons in the dialogue move in an atmosphere of Roman calm and dignity. They do not become excited or angry: strong things are said, but no tempers are lost. In this Minucius contrasts strongly with Tertullian, who was far more African than Latin. In Minucius we see Roman aristocracy accepting the new religion; it is the beginning of that movement which saw the noble and ancient families of Rome become monks.

(Chapters i, ii, iii, iv.) Octavius, the dear friend of Minucius, arrives in Rome, and the two, with Cæcilius, are walking by the sea-shore: Cæcilius kisses his hand to an image of Serapis, and the action provokes a debate with Octavius, in which Minucius is arbiter. It is interesting to note that it arises from an action in which Cæcilius has philosophy against him as well as Christianity.

(Chapters v–xiii.) Cæcilius opens his attack on Christianity with the rationalist argument, the baselessness of their religion in a universe governed by necessity. Pagan religion, on the other hand, recognises this necessity, or fate; and the Romans have always met success by adoring what gods they found, and by their observance of auguries and auspices. The atheist philosophers who tried to destroy this religion were

deservedly punished. How much more a low and illiterate conspiracy of slaves who despise the temples while their own ceremonies will not bear the light of day! Chapter ix develops the slanderous charges against the Christians. He then goes on to ridicule the idea of an omnipresent God, whom he regards as a sort of spy; he also satirises the destruction of the world by fire, the bodily resurrection, and the present want and poverty of Christians. "Where is that God who is able to help you when you come to life again if he cannot help you while you are in this life?" True philosophy is sceptical, and the best advice to Christians is to give up their audacious religion, "lest either a childish religion should be introduced, or all religion should be overthrown."

(Chapters xvi–xxi.) Octavius, in reply, points out that the truth of an argument does not depend on the poverty or riches of the man who advances it. He then goes on to the proof from design of the existence of a Creator; a God greater than all definitions, recognised by common people in their ordinary speech, and praised by the poets and the philosophers, especially Plato in the *Timæus*. This being so, we must not be carried away by the old fables and belief in gods who, after all, were only deified men. Then follows (xxi–xxiv) the usual satire on the gods, their obscene myths, and their helpless images. The Roman Empire, he says, was obtained, not by favour of their gods, but by violence and crime; "for to adore what you have taken by force is to consecrate sacrilege, not divinities." Nor were the auspices able to foretell the failure of Regulus and other great commanders. It is the devils, not God, who are worshipped in the pagan religion. But the devils fear the Christians and fly from them, and it is they who set going the slanders against them, which he repudiates. Christians do not worship the cross,

nor drink the blood of infants; though pagans do just as cruel things with their children. And Christian feasts are modest and temperate.

(Chapters xxxii–xxxviii.) Then comes the vindication of the pure religion of Christianity. The Christian God has no temples, because He is too great. "Is it not better He should be dedicated in our mind, consecrated in our inmost heart?" He is omnipresent, and the whole world is His family; and He was able to protect the Jews as long as they followed Him. The philosophers have not found the destruction of the world by fire an absurdity; and the resurrection of the body is equally possible. It does not follow that what is withdrawn from our eyes perishes before God; and punishment is impossible without the bodily resurrection. Christians do not fear comparison with pagans in morality, now or at the last day. As for fate, fate is God. Chapter xxxvii points out how Christian boys and young women daily suffer death with a courage comparable with that shown by Mucius Scævola or Regulus; while the heathens find pleasure in their deaths and like spectacles. Christians, therefore, absent themselves from sacrifices and shows not because God's creation is corrupted, but lest any should think they were submitting to the devils in whose honour they were held. They are the true philosophers—"We who bear wisdom, not in our dress, but in our mind; we do not speak great things, but do them."

(Chapters xxxix–xlii.) Cæcilius declares himself conquered, and asks for further instruction—which, indeed, is necessary, the apology, as usual, dealing only with the first step towards the Christian faith. So ends the work, of which Milman said: "Perhaps no late work, either pagan or Christian, reminds us of the golden days of Latin prose so much as the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix."

When we come to the consideration of **Tertullian**, we

find that, if he borrowed from Cicero at all, it was from *Philippics*. His is the spirit of the lawyer, not of the philosopher: he pushes home his case with every art of which he is master—epigram, force, fury, vivid denunciation. His fault is his ferocity and lack of sympathy; on the other hand, he is the most arresting thinker of the century. And it is a remarkable achievement that he should also be the father of Latin theology. It is also quite possible that, as a jurist, he had a finger in the codifying of Roman law in this century: certainly a lawyer of his name was prominent in this great work. In his *Apology* he collects and weaves together in a masterly manner the arguments of all who had gone before him.

The first sixteen chapters of his *Apology* answer the charges against the Christians, and retort others against the pagans (chapters i–iv). He begins by alleging that the persecution of Christians is the persecution of the truth by ignorance and wickedness, as is natural in a world where truth is a stranger. The judges condemn Christians mainly out of fear of the mob; and, as no crime is ever alleged against them, this is a sure sign that they must be innocent. It seems, therefore, that they are persecuted merely for their name, and the pagans do not understand the meaning even of that. If the law orders this persecution, then the law should be amended, as so many laws are now being amended.

Chapter v contains the debateable statement that the wisest of Emperors have protected the Christians. Tiberius wished to enrol Christ among the received gods; Nero and Domitian were the first persecutors; Marcus Aurelius, Trajan, Hadrian, Vespasian, and Antoninus Pius all were favourable to Christianity. This is scarcely true of Marcus Aurelius; and Tertullian is clearly carried away by the legend of the Thundering Legion.

(Chapters vi–viii.) In spite of the Roman talk of the antiquity of their religion, they are themselves introducing scandalous novelties every day, so that civilisation is now corrupt and degenerate. And yet it is common talk that Christians behave in this fashion, which is pure rumour with no shred of evidence. The crimes charged on the Christians are incredible : human nature is incapable of them. Could you do them ?

(Chapters ix–xvi.) And yet of all these practices the pagans themselves are guilty : the sacrifice of children to Saturn, the exposition of children, the bloodlust at the gladiatorial games, and the immoralities of the tragedies. You call us atheists, who worship God ; you yourselves worship men ; and the men you have deified are not half so moral as Socrates or Aristides. You worship images ; and, when these images are done with, put the materials to any shameful use. You insult your gods by sacrificing to them the worthless parts of animals. Your poets represent the gods as full of all manner of evil passions. You, and not the Christians, are the profaners of temples. You, not the Christians, worship the ass's head, the Cross, or the sun.

(Chapters xvii–xxi.) What is Christianity ? We believe in one God, the Creator, omnipresent, pure Spirit, the giver of all good things ; to Him the soul of man turns naturally in gratitude and worship. He is revealed to us by the prophets, whose works were translated in Egypt under Ptolemy Philadelphus. They are the oldest writings in the world—Moses lived a thousand years before the Trojan War ; and their divinity is proved by the fact that everything they wrote came to pass. For among the Jews the Word of God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, Spirit of Spirit, God of God, coming like a ray from the sun : and He wrought such miracles, and so died and rose again, as the prophets had foretold. He is the true God ; others are false.

(Chapters xxii–xxvii.). Heathen religion, on the other hand, is inspired by devils. These devils are the fallen angels; they abound everywhere, and are responsible for the miracles of paganism. But they fly from Christians, who are able to cure every man who is possessed by them. It is these devils who form the array of gods worshipped throughout the Roman Empire. It is not to these that Rome owes her grandeur, but to war and desolation. Kingdoms are held only under the one supreme God. These devils are the origin of the persecution of Christians; because they see their time is short.

(Chapters xxviii–xxxviii.) The second charge against Roman religion is that the Emperor is put above all the gods, and is their patron. Our God is the eternal God, the Maker of Kings, to whom we pray for the prosperity of the Emperor. For we are ordered to love our enemies; besides, we believe that the prosperity of the Empire stands between us and the dissolution of the world. Therefore we are loyal to the Emperor, though we do not call him God, "for I am Cæsar's free-born subject, and we have but one Lord, the Almighty and Eternal God, who is his Lord as well as mine." This is why we take no part in the festivals of Cæsar. But we, who love even our enemies, should not be persecuted as ill-doers. We are numerous enough to destroy the Empire in a single night; yet we defend it with our prayers. Therefore, we whose interests lie in another world, cannot be suspected of having designs against the kingdom of this world.

(Chapters xxxix–l.) Who are we, then? A corporation of men, bound together to pray; we meet together to read the Holy Scriptures, and to improve our lives; we pay our money into a common fund for charitable purposes; our brotherhood lasts unto death, and our whole lives are consecrated with prayer. It is

quite unreasonable that we should be held to be the cause of every calamity. All the evils which God sends on the world are sent as a warning to us, and as a punishment to you. We are, as a matter of fact, your best citizens, not Brahmins or hermits, but good people living in the world. Yet you condemn us and hate us merely for our name; whereas we are likely to be better than other people because we believe God is always about us and will punish us if we go wrong. The philosophers are not treated as we are, and yet we are more inoffensive than they. And they stole many of their teachings from the Holy Scriptures. They differ from us on the question of the resurrection of the body; but how can men be punished for their sins—as the poets say they will—unless this is so? You ought not, then, to persecute us; yet what is more glorious than the triumph of Christian martyrdom? The more martyrdoms the more Christians; the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. And there is such blessed emulation and discord between the divine and human judgment, that, when you condemn us upon earth, God absolves us in heaven.

Even in a short summary it can be seen how closely parallel are the two Latin apologies, in spite of their difference of tone. The same arguments follow in the same order, and both conform generally to the norm observable as early as the *Apology* of Aristides. Tertullian differs from Minucius in giving an account of Christian theology and worship, the latter distressingly meagre, doubtless from reasons of secrecy. Both apologies contain the idea afterwards developed by Tertullian in the *Testimonium Animæ*.

The conception of the Church as a sojourner upon earth we find also in the fragmentary **Epistle to Diognetus**, which, though written in Greek, is therefore noticed here. If Diognetus were the philosopher

of that name mentioned by Marcus Aurelius, it might help us to understand this connection. It is possible he may belong to the aristocratic society of Rome, and have circulated his pamphlet in philosophic circles where Greek was spoken, just as we find the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius written in Greek. It is much more tolerant than either of the two *Latin* apologies; for it is addressed to a sympathetic inquirer: and this may explain many of the notable differences.

(Chapter i.). The apology is addressed to an official of high rank, who desires to understand the Christians' faith in God, their scorn of death, their rejection of paganism and Judaism, and their late appearance in the world.

(Chapters ii–iv.) The author first satirises the worship of idols in the spirit of Isaiah or of the Psalms. He commends the Jewish faith in God, but condemns their sacrifices and their observance of seasons.

(Chapters v–x.) After this short introduction follows the famous panegyric on Christianity. Christians live in the world; but their citizenship is in heaven. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. What the soul is to the body, the Christians are to the world. Chapter vii contains the classic description of the Incarnation; how God, the Creator, sent His Son in love and not in judgment: for force is not an attribute of God. In His power it is that Christians face death. This is a better theory than the fancies of the philosophers. God bore with the world's sin, until the time came that He sent His Son in mercy to take away that sin. Faith in this message is found through love and service.

Chapters xi and xii form an appendix, perhaps by a later hand. First comes a little summary of apostolic teaching and practice; then a little homily showing, from the story of the Garden of Eden, that life is neces-

sary as well as knowledge; and that it is found in the Church, where "salvation is set forth plainly, and the apostles are interpreted, and the Lord's passover is carried on, and the seasons follow each other in order, and the Word is glad to teach the saints, the Word through whom the Father is glorified, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

If this little apology shows points of resemblance with Tertullian, the points of difference are no less striking. There is no reference to the argument from prophecy; there is no theory of devils. In this it goes back to the period before St. Justin, and allies itself with the *Apology* of Aristides, from which we began. All goes to show that it is earlier than Tertullian, and that the late date suggested by some critics cannot be upheld. It should, however, be grouped here: the mystical conception of the Church in chapters v and vi owes nothing to any earlier apologist, while it links the work with the work of Tertullian, who actually quotes the statement that "force is not an attribute of God."

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

" But when you hear the prophets speaking, as it were, under the names of different persons, you must not look upon the men who speak so much as upon the divine Logos who inspires them."—ST. JUSTIN : *Apology* I, xlvi, 46.

" It would be irrational for us to cease to believe in the Spirit from God, who moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments, and to give heed to mere human opinions."—ATHENAGORAS : *Embassy*, vii.

" From these very old records it is proved that the writings of the rest are more recent than the writings given to us through Moses—yes, and than the subsequent prophets. For the last of the prophets, who was called Zechariah, was contemporary with the reign of Darius. But even the lawgivers themselves are all found to have legislated subsequently to that period. For if one were to mention Solon the Athenian, he lived in the days of the Kings Cyrus and Darius, in the time of the prophet Zechariah first mentioned, who was by many years the last of the prophets."—THEOPHILUS : *To Autolycus*, iii, 23.

" And while I was giving my most earnest attention to the matter, I chanced to meet with certain barbarian writings, too old to be compared with the opinions of the Greeks, and too divine to be compared with their errors ; and I was led to put faith in these by the unpretending cast of the language, the inartificial character of the writers, the foreknowledge which they displayed of future events, the excellent quality of their precepts, and the declaration of the government of the universe by one Being."—TATIAN : *To the Greeks*, xxix.

" For there is nothing of moment now done, but what has been foretold ; and what we prophets see, our forefathers have heard from the prophets. . . . Hence it is we come to be so infallibly certain of many things not yet come to pass from the experience we have of those that are ; because those were presignified by the same Spirit as these we see fulfilling every day . . . and this prophetic Spirit sees everything always and at once, though men see only by pieces and successions of time, and are forced to distinguish between the beginning of a prophecy and the fulfilling it, to separate present from future, and past from present."—TERTULLIAN : *Apology*, xx.

III. Christianity and History

When our first apology, the Acts of the Apostles, was written, Christianity was still a sect within the Jewish Church, differentiated mainly by its belief that the Christ was Jesus, and that Gentiles could be admitted into it by baptism. When St. Justin wrote, Christianity was an independent and supra-national society, which claimed to be the true heir of the old covenant of Judaism, while non-Christian Judaism was crystallising into the Rabbinic legalism we now know. The historical order, therefore, as well as the logical order, is to deal first with the defence Christianity made to the Jews.

Although St. Justin wrote about the middle of the second century, his conversion goes back to the days before the disastrous war of 135. A pagan of Samaritan birth, he had studied one philosophy after another until he was finally brought to Christianity as the crown of all philosophies; from that day he assumed the philosopher's cloak and taught the new discipline at Rome, where he ultimately suffered martyrdom. He is able to feel a righteous indignation, as the *Second Apology* shows, but the great charm of his character is its mildness and tolerance, and his sympathy for those who do not agree with him. A certain simplicity and grace makes him one of the most pleasing writers of the century.

The immediate cause of his conversion was the study of the Jewish Scriptures, and especially of the prophets; he was deeply impressed, not only by the truth of their prophecies of Jesus Christ, but also by the authority with which they spoke. They were as yet the only inspired writings of the Church, and they were read, of course, in the Greek version called Septuagint. Indeed,

this version had become so exclusively Christian that, by the time of St. Justin, the Jews had been forced to make new translations in which he accused them of making alterations and omissions with an anti-Christian bias. The original Septuagint had been translated in Egypt by order of Ptolemy II, as we learn from Josephus and the *Letter of Aristeas*. But the latter is a forgery, and, though St. Justin has been blamed for placing the "authorised version" in the reigns of Herod and Ptolemy XII, there is something to be said for the theory that it was only then that the work (begun perhaps under Ptolemy II) was finished and received its official *imprimatur*.

The Septuagint, then, was firmly established as the Bible of the new Church, and the unquestioned ground of controversy with the Jews; how firmly, we may judge by the fact that, in spite of the existence of Gospels, it is the main influence in leading the philosopher to Christ. The New Testament, as such, was unknown; and the use of the Septuagint is so important and so fundamental that we must begin by an examination of the *Dialogue with Trypho*.

The speeches in the earlier chapters of the Acts give us some account of the first Christian use of Scripture. Our Lord had very definitely regarded Himself as fulfilling the words of the prophets, and the early theology carried on this line of argument. The apostolic Church saw in Him the Suffering Servant, and the Messianic King, whose soul God would not leave in hell; and they applied to Him the words of the law, "Cursed is whosoever hangeth on a tree." To us, staled with custom and repetition, these words seem commonplace and colourless enough; if we put ourselves back into the place of those who discovered them, the weird affinities between the two dispensations will seem extraordinarily illuminating and suggestive. Another and peculiar use of the

Septuagint is that of St. Paul; he endeavours to show that the blessings of Jehovah have never been given in exchange for obedience to a material law, but in living response to God, the moral attitude which he calls faith. He employs the allegorical method of interpretation, which is a perfectly legitimate one, so long as there is a real moral affinity between the things compared. He has the spirit of Scripture on his side, though he finds it difficult to do himself justice by quoting isolated verses. A third stage is that which we find in St. Matthew's Gospel. Here we have a selection of proof-texts introduced at intervals wherever there seems to be what we might imagine the faintest or most fanciful verbal likeness. Sometimes the text is plainly misapplied, as in "Out of Egypt have I called my son," which refers not to the Messiah, but to the Jewish race.

The truth is that the Christians had now got to the point at which the whole Old Testament was claimed for Jesus, and a meaning had to be found for every verse. Collections of such verses, with their interpretations, were in circulation, and part of one is found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. To make the explanation cover the whole facts, the method of allegory is chosen. The details of the law have mystical Christian meanings hidden in them, and Abraham had three hundred and eighteen servants because, when expressed in Greek numerals, that number signifies the name of Jesus and the sign of the cross (IHT). The hare and the hyena are unclean beasts because they typify certain sins.

It is obvious that it is not easy to interpret the whole Old Testament along these lines, and it is no wonder that there was a strong reaction in favour of giving up the Old Testament altogether. A large body of Christians, under Marcion, rejected it, denying that the good God can ever have given the law, and regarding the

prophets alone as His witnesses. This heroic remedy, however, was not destined to be adopted; the Church rightly held that the Septuagint contained a revelation of God too valuable to throw away, and yet it had no satisfactory method of interpreting it.

St. Justin found his point of contact in the prophets. They were the men who brought him to the truth, not arguing about it like philosophers, but testifying as witnesses worthy to be believed. Their credentials were that the facts that they prophesied came to pass. This was always the main line of Christian evidence: the arguments which had been found so effective with the Jews could easily be put in a form that would appeal to the Gentiles. Prophets long ago foretold the coming of Jesus as the Messiah, describing accurately the story of His life: the Messiah comes, and their words are fulfilled to the letter. This was obviously a powerful argument in the second century, when a high value was placed on the Old Testament, even by the heathen, in virtue of its undisputed antiquity.

In the *Dialogue with Trypho* we find almost the last attempt of Christianity to convert the sons of Abraham to their true Messiah. Trypho is a thinker, a philosopher, a student of the heathen theologies. He has read the Gospel as well as the books of Moses, and is ready to discuss the question openly and without prejudice. Such Jews were hard to find a generation later: for all Philo's spiritual sons were Christians. How, then, do the broad-minded Jew and the broad-minded Christian regard their Bible?

Both refer to it as their standard and basis of argument. To the Christian it is as authoritative as to the Jew; Trypho commends Justin on this point. But, while he acknowledges the high level of Christian morality (too high he thinks it), he points out two inconsistencies, the rejection of the Law of God, and the

faith in a mere man, Christ Jesus. To a devout Jew, both these seem incompatible with the belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament. In the course of a platonic dialogue of two days, St. Justin explains the Christian way of looking at these points, using a wealth of illustration and detail that is invaluable. We shall not deal with the abrogation of the law, as it is really answered by the view of the Person of Christ, and it has very little bearing on modern thought. Let it suffice to say that the conflict between the Law and Grace exists in the Scriptures itself, and that the Christians had nearer affinities to the prophets who opposed legalism.

St. Justin and Christians generally claimed that in them the prophetic age had begun again; to St. Justin the Holy Ghost is the prophetic Spirit; God, who made earth and heaven, was as near to him as to Isaiah. And this God, whose sons they were, who was at once transcendent and intimate, was revealed to them in the pages of the Bible as the God of history. Jew and Christian were at one on this point; but the Christian believed that he had actual possession of the Spirit, "who spake by the prophets," and that he had seen and touched the Word of God who came to them. He saw the universe as a single process leading up to Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus, it was no mere metaphor to say that the Christian Church is the true Israel. The Scripture belongs to them, and to them alone the promises have come; they have entered into the land of milk and honey, which was prepared for the children of Abraham. The actual Jews after the flesh misinterpret the Scriptures; the Christians only can understand them, because they read them in the spirit in which they were written. And, though this is only beginning to work itself out completely to-day as a result of historical study, he

was quite right; along the lines of narrow legal interpretation, verse by verse, it is impossible to understand them.

What, then, is the story told by the Scriptures of the Jews? It is the story of how God Almighty revealed Himself to one savage tribe in Arabia, how He brought them into the land of Palestine, how He set up in Jerusalem a house where all nations might come and worship Him, and hear His law . . . it is the revelation of the one everlasting God. His first law is, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me." He admits no equal, no rival, no inferior even. Yet the Christians who accept this revelation worship also the man, Jesus Christ, and whom they give the blasphemous title "Son of God."

In reply to this criticism, St. Justin goes to the Old Testament, and points out how, even there, the one God is represented as having more than one mode of personality. When God chose to make known His Name and Nature to His chosen people, the Being who spoke to Moses from the burning bush is described as "the Angel of the Lord"; and it is this "Angel" who utters the great revelation, "I am what I am." This Angel is not to be confused with the Seraphim and Cherubim, and with the winged messengers of Christian art: He is a divine figure who comes as a messenger from God, and yet speaks as God Himself, receiving the prayer and sacrifice of the faithful. It is He who marches with the Hebrews into the promised land, sometimes as the Angel, sometimes as the "presence" (or face) of Jehovah.

Again, the Word of the Lord, an expression which, in its technical use, is said to be a sign of late authorship, implies a great deal more than a mere verbal message; it was certainly a divine and creative afflatus passing from Jehovah to the prophet, an actual power going forth from God and abiding in man. By the Word of

the Lord the prophets spoke; but, before this, "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the spirit of His mouth." Even in creation it is the same power which actually brings about the work done. "He spake the Word, and they were created." This power emitted from God is identified by Justin with the Angel of the Lord, and it is the story of His action in the world which Hebrew literature relates. It is He who perfectly carries out the will of His Father; it was He who created the world, separated out the Jews from all races, taught them by the prophets, and finally became incarnate and suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Now let us stop here for a moment and consider what on earth this all means to us in the twentieth century, when the words "Logos," "Angelos," and "Kurios," and all the developments of later Judaism mean so little. If we grant that St. Justin is right, that the Old Testament shows distinct traces of a belief in a second centre of personality in the Godhead, what follows? We are told by scholars that the definite conception of the Logos is late; we have found the idea of the "angel" of Bel in Babylonian folk-lore; and we imagine that these words can never again mean to us what they once meant. Even with Jews, we might suppose, this line of argument would not prove very fruitful.

But, on the other hand, let us be honest. This Jesus of Nazareth, who was born *imperante Augusto*, and suffered under Tiberius, obstinately refuses to stay buried in the rock-sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. He is alive and walking the world to-day, after many incredible deaths and resurrections. A hundred years ago, for instance, His Church was on its death-bed: to-day, though reft of the lip-worship of thousands, it has assimilated itself to modern thought, and moves with a vigour and power that is astonishing. Mathematically

considered, it has dwindled. As a living organism it grows daily, with a new yet ancient vitality. And the person of Jesus of Nazareth is still the crowning and final problem which the scientific world has to explain and every honest man has to face.

Now, generally speaking, the world has recognised this fact, and students of all nationalities are devoting their energies to the investigation of His life, message and person. Those who have done so along frankly anti-Christian lines have strangely failed to produce any satisfactory or coherent description or explanation of what happened. Those who have tried to restate ancient beliefs in the terms of modern thought have not succeeded in winning over either party. There remains only the third possibility that St. Justin's faith is true, and that He who made the world, and inspired the prophets, Himself entered the sphere of His own creation. As things stand at present, we must either accept this belief or declare that the problem has never been solved.

The real objection of the modern world to the Christian view of the personality of our Lord is that it implies views about creation which are repugnant to prevailing conceptions. To the modern man, God no longer has the full richness and power of personality; he is a stream of tendencies making for something, perhaps for righteousness. A certain conception of evolution (not necessarily scientific) shuts up the first cause within the limits and laws of His own universe; and, if there is anything we can call will or personality, it is will or personality only struggling into consciousness under the same limitations and with less success than ourselves.

With this, the crucial point of our whole study, we shall deal later; what concerns this chapter is the fact that in the modern world we can no longer draw infer-

ences from the Old Testament in the manner of St. Justin. The book which triumphantly imposed itself on the world of Greek philosophy and Roman law stands suspect in the eyes of modern science. And in a certain degree we are sure modern science is right. We do not now believe that the Holy Spirit chose to lay down beforehand material details in the life of our Lord, that He should ride into Jerusalem on an ass, or that the ass should be tied to a vine. We look on it from another point of view. We see Him as the ultimate result of a long line of evolution, where law-giver, prophet, and apocalyptist combine to produce the perfect Son of Man. As modern historical analysis lays it bare to us, we see a complete historical progress from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary.

When Israel first appears clearly on the stage of history it is as a superstitious people using the degraded rites of the Arab and the Canaanite; yet even then we know of no time when the name of their God was not a symbol of a supernatural Being, higher and more powerful than the gods of the Hittite and Amorite, who fled before Him when He came marching from Sinai. As long as they served Him, He was bound to fight for them, and win them the victory.

We then see one of the most amazing developments in all earth's history, the rise of the prophets. There had been seers of the ecstatic and clairvoyant type before, but it is Elijah, as far as we know, who found that God was not whirlwind or fire, but a whispering Word. This also was Jehovah. There was no logic at work, no learning, no study; it was plain prayer. Prophet after prophet, poet after poet, arose, who claimed to have heard this Word in the silence and secrecy of their hearts. In two centuries there was a new religion. There was only one God, holy and righteous, immortal, invisible, transcending all space,

and He was to be worshipped in a pure heart and with a holy life; finally came the unique conception of the true Servant of Jehovah, who was destined by pain and suffering and shame to win redemption for His people.

This was the supreme gift which the Jews gave the world; and the success of Christianity is proof that the world realised the value of the gift. But alongside went the evolution of a law, ceremonial and moral, that localised the worship of God in Jerusalem and preserved there the writings and psalms of the prophets. In the writers of the last two centuries B.C. we find a more material note. The old conception is reasserted and emphasised: Jehovah will send His anointed to destroy all the kingdoms of the world, and set up His own Kingdom in Mount Zion. In the Day of the Lord the Jews will be rewarded for their suffering and service. Finally, this picture expanded and became greater and greater: the messenger of Jehovah is the Son of Man chosen before all time; heaven and earth pass away, and in a new heaven and a new earth the sons of Abraham enter the Kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

Finally came Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed, not to teach about the Son of Man, but to be the Son of Man. His true descent was from the prophets, and He claimed to be the Suffering Servant whose death was to win the redemption of His people.

Now the centuries of history summed up here in a few lines are to be regarded only in one way by the student of religion. They are a history of the evolution of religion from its lowest to its highest; they are a perfect anthology of religious experience from Baalism to Jesus Christ. And it is all purely natural; there is no conscious logic or philosophy. From the crudest faith in Jehovah we are driven along the path of experience

until we come to the cross. One path leads into another; one belief implies another; one experience begets another; and by action, faith, and experience Judaism evolves into Christianity.

To return, then, to the theory of St. Justin, we must now ask how this evolution is to be explained. Was there a divine moral Being, the Word, with whom the prophets had come in contact, or was it a purely natural result of evolution and environment? St. Justin saw it in a light different from us. By unmistakable signs God had brought His people into Palestine; He had given them a law by an infallible mediator; He had blessed their obedience with victory, and punished their rebellion with captivity; He had given them infallible guidance by the mouth of His prophets; He had pointed forward to a great Day, and a great Deliverer, and these prophecies had all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Such a scheme left little room for faith, and we may well wonder, with Gibbon, that "the contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles; and, as the protection of Heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionate degree of vigour and purity." But it is St. Justin's theology, not his science, that interests us: he shared these historical views with the Jew Trypho, and the whole cultivated world of his day; with our advance in historical method, we pass beyond his history: it is very much to be doubted whether we pass beyond his philosophy of history.

It was impossible for Christians of that era to have any rational theory of Old Testament interpretation. They accepted the Septuagint in face of amazing difficulties. They acknowledged it to be the revelation of God, and yet they denied the law He seemed to have laid down so explicitly. On the one hand, Ebionites

and Nazarenes urged them to be logical, accept the whole book, and not break the decrees of God. On the other hand, Marcionites and Gnostics, with equal logic, declared that Jehovah was a tyrant and a bungler, and that the whole Jewish Scriptures were to be discarded by the "spiritual." In the midst of this clamour the Church saw two things: circumcision, sabbaths, and the law must go, and yet the book was to be kept as the divine revelation. The difficulties in interpretation were obvious enough, educated heathens like Porphyry were quite alive to them; but it speaks volumes for the divine common sense of the Church that she faced the difficulties and retained the Bible.

But, though we have an immense advantage over St. Justin in our interpretation of Old Testament history, we must remember that, for purposes of religion, it is the same history we are rendering. Both versions end at Calvary, both begin from God, and both deal with the same phenomena. We both have the same results to account for; and it makes it no easier to do so even if there were no theophanies; it makes it harder. To the lover of miracles there are no miracles. If we believe that the five books of the law were written before ever Palestine was entered, then the rise of the prophets is no more supernatural than the sunrise. If we believe the Hebrews were a superstitious, semi-Canaanite tribe of savages, the rise of the prophets is a miracle of miracles.

It was to a crowd of fetish-worshippers, dancing madly about the altars of Baal or the hangings of the maypole, dedicating their children by fire to Moloch, building houses in the sacrifice of their first-born, credulous of taboo, trustful in their war-god Jehovah, whom they carried into battle in a wooden box, that Elijah came. Civilisation, such as it was, was against him; yet to Elijah, child of the desert, and cousin to

the wandering Arabs, the great secret was given that Jehovah was not in the earthquake, but in the whispering of a small voice. And this conviction and unshakable faith grew till the whole nation was impregnated with it; nowhere else is found this belief in a transcendent deity who is at once intimate and tender, nowhere else is a localised worship, like that of Zion, addressed to an infinite and eternal Being—

> Who hath His dwelling so high,
> And yet humbleth Himself to behold the things
> which are in heaven and earth.

Finally, it was this faith that led up to Him who said, "God is spirit," and it is this faith in the universal and intimate God which Christianity, alone of all religions, has been able to spread and perpetuate.

Whether our history and chronology be that of Ussher or Wellhausen, it is still these facts which we have to explain, and these facts are the basis of St. Justin's logic. We have here, undenied and undeniable, a continuous body of experience, we have an actual force whose influence can be measured in history: it brought the Jewish nation through disaster after disaster to the crowning failure of Calvary; it grew stronger and stronger until its widening influence touched every nation of the world; it became the Christianity of to-day, and is growing still. How are these hard facts to be explained?

The evolutionist of the old school is always able to convince himself that the growth of such a religion can be explained on purely "natural" grounds. To him it is only a record of the national faith in Jehovah, modifying itself to meet successive changes of environment. When circumstances change, the faith must either adapt itself to new conditions or go under. At

each crisis a prophet is found who makes the required adaptation, the message is given, and the faith goes on. It is no more than the natural result of forces already in the world, it can no other. It is natural selection over again, and the survival of the organism best adapted to its environment.

One answer would be that while a cow or other animal may be said to adapt itself to its environment, a man does not. He adapts his environment to himself. But we must go deeper than that. We must fight out here the battle which M. Bergson is fighting in the sphere of physical evolution. The old view is now condemned on purely scientific grounds: natural selection can never be a cause of evolution, but only a method along which it functions. Even as a method it is inadequate, and does not cover the whole ground: Darwin's own book on *Orchids* raises problems it can never solve. Logically, too, it is dishonest; it is trying somehow to juggle an effect without a cause. As M. Bergson points out, the development of a little spot of pigment into an eye cannot be due solely to the influence of light or other external conditions; there must be a potentiality in the matter itself, there must be a cause somewhere, a force capable under necessity of producing eyes, what he calls the *élan vital*; to which we Christians might append the text, "He who made the eye, shall He not see?"

Still more in history must there be an efficient force behind evolutionary development, a cause of like nature to the effect. There must be behind Hebrew religion an *élan vital* which carried it over the mountains of difficulty; and, if this is so, we are immediately brought back to a reconsideration of the idea that there was a divine Person who bore to the prophets exactly the relation which they said He did, St. Justin's theory of the Angel or Logos, which, as we have seen above, is a

perfectly legitimate deduction from the data he had at his command. We would prefer to say that Jewish faith demanded this conception, rather than that it is proved by their experience. Where modern thought would find its difficulty would be in the conception of this power as a person.

The prophets, as they rose to their conception of a supramundane and eternal God, nevertheless clung to their belief in His revelation in history and experience. This, as we have seen, is their unique achievement. But reflection suggested that it was not the eternal God who appeared to Manoah about the time of the evening sacrifice, or to Moses in the burning bush; it was His Second Self, or Angel. God inhabits eternity; His angel appears in space. No man hath seen God at any time: He whom the world sees is His messenger, who yet is Himself. Philosophy would have denied any connection between Jewish history and the high and holy God; faith, at once mystical and practical, insisted on both. And the psychology of religious experience demands that we should think differently of God in history and creation, and God in His holiness and eternity.

Similarly, the Word which is heard in the heart of the prophet, that Being with whom interior communion is held in the spirit, the inspiration of every sage and lawgiver, is subtly different from the Eternal. Inasmuch as the Word issues forth from God, and enters the soul of the prophet, it is again God in action rather than God in eternity. And if we look into our own hearts we see how just this distinction is, and how different is the God we conceive as eternal and self-existing from the God to Whom we pray for help and guidance. We can none of us, surely, worship our conception of the Absolute. An undue insistence on the first leads to a barren philosophy like Stoicism or scepticism;

concentration on the second soon degrades religion to the level of a mere cult.

This distinction in religious psychology, while it obviously proves nothing, is a useful one; and it is interesting to note how widespread we find some such idea. It is almost universal for a primitive people to have a sky-god to whom they do not pray except, perhaps, in moments of despair, and a lesser god or hero who will hear them. According to Christian theology, this distinction is not without its basis in fact. The God of history or experience is the Angelos or Logos of St. Justin, the " Prophet " of Theophilus, who inspired the prophets, thus preparing the way for His own incarnation as the supreme Prophet, Jesus Christ. An interesting point is our Lord's own understanding of the prophets.

He regarded Himself as their successor and the fulfilment of their words; but we never find in His mouth those fanciful and merely verbal applications of their words in which so many of His followers delighted. A central part of His teaching is that the prophets all spoke in protest against the religion of their day. They were unpopular; the people refused to hear them, they were stoned, beaten, killed, precisely because they really came from God and gave His message. They were honoured anywhere but in their own country, and the most appropriate place for a prophet to die was Jerusalem. He Himself, as the fulfilment of all their hopes, was doomed to the same fate, and His followers could only expect a similar persecution, which would, at least, show that they were in the direct line of descent from the prophets their fathers.

With regard to actual prediction, we must discard the majority of references which St. Justin believed to be prophecies of the Messiah. Enough remains to show that they all looked forward to one who would fulfil

their hopes and restore the kingdom to Israel. The apocalyptic writers of the time expected a celestial Cæsar; but Jesus Christ was a prophet, not an apocalyptist. He is saturated with the language of the prophets, and it is doubtful whether one verbal quotation from an extra-canonical apocalyptist can be clearly proved. He may be using language from the *Book of Enoch*; but the difficulty of proving that He knew it is sufficient to show how its influence compares with that of the prophets. On the mountain of transfiguration He is seen between Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, but where is Enoch, the apocalyptist, the third of the Old Testament worthies who was taken straight to God without dying?

The highest conception of the prophets was that of the Servant of Jehovah. Some inspired poet of the Exile drew that picture of the prophetic nation, or the prophetic hero, bruised, smitten, wounded to death, making no complaint to God, but by his death bringing illumination to his guilty nation. This is the fate of many a prophet, and Jesus of Nazareth saw how clearly it was to be His. Like the Suffering Servant, He was despised and rejected of men, falsely accused and condemned; His followers tried to resist by force, thus making it true that He was numbered among the lawbreakers; He gave His life a ransom for many; and He made no resistance, He turned His cheek to the smiter. "For the prophecies concerning Me are valid."

This is only an instance to show how completely Jesus regarded Himself as the fulfilment or completion of Old Testament prophecy: just indeed as He also "fulfilled" the law, and as the Paschal Sacrifice was to be drunk "new" ("fulfilled"—Luke) in the kingdom. And the seal of God was set on His work by the Resurrection, the final piece of evidence in the long chain of

cause and effect with which the Christian confronted his Jewish brother.

Very tremendous this must have appeared to the Jew, and irresistible almost the belief that He was at last the Angelos of God in human form. And to the serious thinker of to-day, who does not hesitate to apply the principles of evolution to the history of world-religion, there must be much which is attractive in the evolutionary teaching of early Christianity. And to anyone who believes in the struggle of a life-principle to express itself, there should be great attraction in the doctrine that the messenger has been, and the Word has spoken. The Jew of to-day, also, turning to a more liberal and spiritual conception of the faith of his fathers, must find in Jesus of Nazareth much which corresponds to the hope of Israel. Now that Jews have been so long the victims of Christian persecution, it ill becomes us to echo the fiery arguments of St. Paul; but at least in some Platonic dialogue, such as St. Justin used with Trypho, we might try to show how, when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away. For in Jesus Christ the law is fulfilled, not destroyed. We have the promises by a more excellent way.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

"I proclaim that I both boast and strive with all my strength to be found a Christian, not because the teachings of Plato differ from those of Christ, but because they are not in all points the same; neither are those of the others, Stoics, and poets, and historians. For each man spoke well in proportion to his own share of the seed of the Word, seeing only what was connected with it. . . . Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians; for, next to God, we worship and love the Word, who is from the Unbegotten and Ineffable God, since He also became Man for our sakes, that, becoming a partner of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing. For all writers were able to see realities darkly because of the sowing in their hearts of the seed of the Word; but the seed and imitation given according to individual capacity is one thing, but the Word itself (of which they have a share and an imitation) is another."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology II*, xiii.

"Man is to be honoured as an equal: God alone is to be feared, who is invisible to mortal eyes and transcends the circle of human art. It is only when I am commanded to deny Him that I disobey men, and will rather die than prove a traitor or an ingrate. Our God had no beginning in time, He alone is without beginning, and He Himself is the beginning of all things. God is Spirit—not pervading matter, but the Maker of the spirit and the form that is in matter; He cannot be seen or touched, though He is Himself the Father of all things, visible and invisible. We know Him from His creation, and apprehend His invisible power by His works. I refuse to worship the work of art which He made for us. The sun and moon were made for us; how can I adore my own servants?"—TATIAN: *To the Greeks*, iv.

"If we dispute Humility, I must tell you that Aristotle could not sit easy till he proudly made his friend Hermias sit below him. . . . The same Aristotle was as gross a flatterer of Alexander to keep that great pupil in order as Plato was of Dionysius for the benefit of his belly. Aristippus in his purple and under the greatest show of gravity,

was a debauchee; and Hippias was killed while actually in ambush against his city . . . and where is now the similitude between a philosopher and a Christian? between a disciple of Greece and of Heaven? A trader in gossip and a saver of souls? Between a man of words and a man of deeds? Between a builder-up of virtue and a destroyer of it? Between a dresser-up of lies and a restorer of truth? Between a thief and a guardian of this sacred *depositum?*"—TERTULLIAN, *Apology*, xlvi.

IV. CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY

WE have roughly sketched St. Justin's use of Old Testament history, and indicated lines along which his argument might be restated in the light of present-day research. We have seen how there emerges from the pages of Jewish revelation the grand figure of the Word of God as the inspiring force behind all prophecy and history; behind Him is God Himself, the unchanging Spectator of a transitory world. And both these conceptions are the result of a practical process of psychological experience, not the result of speculation. There is no intellectual research into the being and attributes of God, and no attempt at a co-ordination of the two aspects, or divisions (whichever they are to be) of His Personality.

Indeed this speculation was impossible for the Jew; he wanted to say much the same sort of thing as the Greek, but he had not the language to say it in. It is almost true to say that he had not an abstract word in his language. Words like "righteousness" or "mercy" refer to concrete acts or states of being; to the state of being acquitted at a trial, to the act of showing mercy at a trial. Such a word as "holiness" never in ordinary speech quite shook itself free from the idea of "tabu." But though this forbade a systematic logic or metaphysic, it gave to the writings of the Jews that poetic permanency for which they are so

remarkable. Philosophical phrases change their meaning in a generation; expressions like—

> "The Lord is my shepherd,"
> "The Lord high and lifted up,"
> "They shall wax old, but Thou shalt endure,"

never lose their meaning, because they are expressed in the universal and intuitive language of the heart. And, as national language is a sure sign of national character, we may deduce from this concrete and poetic use of words that the Jews were wanting in philosophy. Besides, words are the tools of thought, and philosophy is impossible without accurate tools.

This accurate apparatus of speech was provided by the Greeks. The first elements of Greek religion were similar to those of Judaism, a number of scattered tribes united by their belief in a universal father-god in the sky, Zeus Panhellenios. There, however, the likeness ceases. From very early times the Greeks brought to the consideration of the problems of life the pure intellect. Philosophy was not original among them: science came to them from Babylon (Thales), philosophy from Persia (Heracleitus), some of their greatest thinkers came from Syria and Egypt, or had travelled in those countries. This is not to deny the originality of Greek genius; but, like all true originality, it consisted in admitting whatever was good from outside. Their unique contribution to world-thought was the use of pure reason in ordering the material and drawing true deductions from it; so that, while the intellectual method of the Greeks was totally different from the moral method of the Hebrews, we must not be surprised if we find affinities between them, seeing that Greek philosophy received an impetus (and that more than once) from the oriental faiths from which we cannot dissociate Judaism.

Now Greek philosophy practically begins with Heracleitus of Ephesus in the sixth century, and, for our purposes, ends with the Stoics, who accepted his physics. Heracleitus took much from the Persians, but he resolutely rejected dualism, or the idea of two opposing forces in the universe; the origin and nature of things was one. This creating, sustaining, and proceeding force was fire; and to the system along which he saw evolution proceeding, he gave the name Logos. Subsequent thinkers were never quite able to banish all appearance of dualism from the universe; but, whatever the opinion on this subject, Greek philosophy was henceforth stamped with the belief that the universe could be explained along one consistent and logical plan, the plan that we call Evolution.

The most abstract words, of course, had once a concrete meaning, and the word Logos retains both. When a person desires to say anything, he first conceives in his own mind the word he wishes to say, and then utters it. That which he conceives and that which he utters are the same. It would exist in his mind, did he never utter it. ("You have taken the word out of my mouth" we say ourselves.) The Hebrew thinks only of the word as it issues from the lips; he even visualises it. The Greek treats it as a conception in the mind of the speaker; there it exists, whether he utters it or not. The conception or thought thrown off in his mind is still the Logos or word. Conversely, the Hebrew has no conception of pure thought; he has not even a word for "I think," he has to say "I said in my heart."

Hence Logos comes to mean thought and reason. Like the Latin *ratio*, it means a scientific system, and hence is applied to the principle of law, which the Greek so clearly perceived to be ruling the world. Law and reason, however, cannot (as far as we have experience) exist apart from a mind, so that the word Logos, with

its personal associations, is not an inappropriate word to use. It just hints enough.

The monistic theory of Heracleitus did not long satisfy a race with the acute intellectual powers of the Greeks. While pure dualism is to be rejected as a complete system, there is too great a difference between the world of reason and the world of experience for us to reject the idea altogether. Having observed the world of phenomena, with its obedience to law, they went on to consider the problems of infinity and absolute being, an infinity which our intellect demands, and yet which it seems impossible to co-ordinate with the world we know through the senses. The result is to discredit the senses, and we arrive either at scepticism or at the conception of the absolute, infinity being most easily defined by universal negatives, incapable of decay or change or motion or evolution or passion; and incapable therefore of any commerce with the changing, moving, decaying world, or with human nature so moved by passion, weakness, or caprice.

> "The One remains; the Many fade and pass.
> Heaven's lights for ever shine; earth's shadows fly.
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity."

The relations of this absolute God with our world form a problem the Greeks were never able to solve. Not only is it difficult to conceive how He could have created it, but His very existence (in isolated self-sufficiency) is unthinkable; for existence, as we know it, is conditioned by things external.

This little sketch is not meant to be anything more than an explanation of certain current philosophical terms. The philosophy of the Roman Empire was neither academic nor speculative. Stoicism was practically universal, but it was a Stoicism wider even than

that of the porch. Zeno, the father of the Stoics, had followed Heracleitus in insisting on one principle (fire) as explaining the universe; but he had allowed a practical dualism, and has flung a religious glamour over his school by adopting, to a limited extent, the oriental renunciation of the Cynics. Under the Rhodian School difficult points in philosophy receded into the background, and the ethic was accommodated more and more to the sober virtues of Rome. But the various terms to which we have alluded were current in educated circles in Ephesus, Alexandria, and Rome, and perhaps used as loosely as we find terms such as "evolution" used to-day. In the Roman world "philosophy" meant this reduced form of Stoicism; "reduced" from the point of view of intellectual speculation, but with the emphasis thrown on conduct. It aimed at mastering the universe rather than understanding it; it solved problems rather than theorems. It set out to bring matter under the control of mind, body under the control of spirit. The spirit of man was a spark of the divine Logos, unhappily imprisoned in the flesh, and it must be as calm, unmoved, impassive, impersonal as God Himself. Stoicism never for one moment dreamed that this God took the slightest interest in what was going on in this poor world below; and yet, in a confused way, it regarded Him as the Soul of the world, and to the order in the world sometimes gave the name of His Logos.

It is easy to see how a Jew would be attracted by this use of the word Logos; it was simplicity itself to equate it with the Word of God, and the absolute with Jehovah. It was to this extent legitimate, that each conception had been evolved in answer to the same problem, though one was in the sphere of morality and human history, the other in that of logic and physical evolution. As far as we know, the equation was first

made by the philosopher Philo. The colony of Jews at Alexandria had long been the most learned and perhaps the largest in the world; and the very translation of the Old Testament "Word" as Logos must have suggested the idea. The conception of Wisdom is coloured with Greek thought, but the fact that we often find "Word" translated by ῥῆμα, shows that the identification can have been at best partial. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, in the personification of Word and Wisdom, Persian influences may have been at work.

Philo is the first and only Jewish philosopher of antiquity. To him Plato was only Moses talking Greek; but, in spite of his Judaism and Platonism, he shows only too many traces of that Gnostic error which is so fatal to sound thinking. It was fatally easy to make the Logos a link between God and the world, thus apparently solving the problem of how the two were connected. The same problem was puzzling devout Jews on the moral side: how could the all-holy God have any dealings with a sinful earth? The idea of putting a link in between seemed so simple, and yet, in the light of subsequent events, we realise that no number of links between God and the world in any way lessens His responsibility for its creation, or His connection with its evolution. It suffices to say here that Philo inserted the Logos as a barrier between God and the world. St. John caught up the phrase, but made the Logos a channel between God and the world. St. John's conception is Scriptural. Philo's is hardly even Stoic; it is Gnostic.

It is inevitable, therefore, that the Logos conception should have been used to present to the philosophic world the theology of the Incarnation. There seem hints of its use before we come to the Gospel of St. John; and, after the publication of this book, it is the normal

apologetic line of argument. We miss it in the Athenian *Apology* of the philosopher Aristides; but it is difficult to imagine that there was not considerable development before we come to St. Justin, who has an elaborate Logos theology. Alexandria, no doubt, as well as Ephesus was connected with its evolution, though we possess practically no information as to this centre of Christian propaganda.

St. Justin was not a man of clear scholarship or relentless logic; but he was well-informed, an original thinker, and as good a philosopher as the heterogeneous age was likely to produce. Epictetus and Marcus were moralists; it fell to the lot of Christian philosophy to carry on something of the work of the great Hellenic schools of speculation, which had practically come to an end with the death of Aristotle. St. Justin's main point was that the same Word of God who had inspired the Hebrew prophets had also inspired the Greek philosophers. Everything which was truly said anywhere he claimed as the revelation of the Logos, and in this statement he had, to guide him, the teaching of St. John that the Logos was eternally with God, had created the world, was the only source of illumination to the world, and was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. The inspiration of the Greek philosophers was not on the whole the prevailing doctrine of the apologists. Tatian, of course, utterly condemns them; Tertullian finds evil influences at work even in the "dæmon" of Socrates; but, even so, the philosophers were too valuable to neglect. Theophilus quotes philosopher and poet as witnesses to the Christian message of morality and judgment, and on the whole Greek philosophy passed into the fabric of Christian theology.

Let us now stop here, as we did in the case of Hebrew history, and consider what this means to us of to-day. It seems wild and unfamiliar, owing to the strangeness

of the language; but the great philosophic conceptions do not change their identity from age to age. The nature of the universe and of the mind remain the same; and we shall gain by looking at things for a moment through the eyes of the philosophers of long ago, especially when they saw as clearly as the Greeks did, and when their intellectual monotheism was combined with the moral monotheism of the Jews to give us Christianity.

What makes the study so difficult to-day is the gigantic field of modern thought. In a hundred years scientific knowledge has outgrown the grasp of a single man, and no simple generalisations have yet been produced which the ordinary man can grasp. Each special branch of knowledge is still in the melting-pot; and, even were the task attempted, it would be a herculean labour to synthesise, say, the god of the mathematician and the god of the biologist.

This, perhaps, is the weak point in the concluding essay of the book called *Foundations*; whether or not modern idealism is the most satisfactory theory of its kind yet produced, it is not the kind of thing with which the Christians of the early centuries had to deal. Roman Stoicism certainly, and the whole of Greek philosophy probably, was concerned with something very different from the building up of theories which would be logically unassailable. It dealt with the whole attitude of man towards the universe, and was not mainly concerned with the production of an accurate and logical metaphysic. If this had been so, I doubt whether Christianity would ever have taken the trouble to deal with it at all. But the object of Stoicism was not to think, but to live in accordance with nature, and the word "philosophy" came eventually to mean an ascetic or religious manner of life.

The two things which the Greek saw in the universe

were Law and Progress, to which we give the one name of Evolution. We ourselves, with all our mechanical bias, can hardly refrain from talking of it in personal terms; we very definitely apply to it the idea of purpose, if not of will; we personify it under the name of Nature, and give it feminine pronouns. In our doubts and difficulties we ask what it can all mean, and what is its purpose, and to what in the end it will come. Thus we view the universe as a progress according to rational principles, solely because our own mind is constructed along those lines. Further, as a rule, we do not go, because speculative thought has lately been at a discount.

But the Greek scientist posed himself with the question, "Why does the universe answer to the laws which I formulate in my brain? What is the rational force in the universe which corresponds to my human way of thinking?" And he had come to the conclusion that this energising law of the universe was of the same nature as human intellect, or rather, that human intellect was derived from the Logos, and had a spark or seed of the same fire. The legitimacy of this conclusion receives powerful testimony from the natural personification we have noted above.

Again, the age was like ours in that the earlier speculations into the manner and being of God were tacitly dropped. Endless discussion had produced nothing, and in the age that followed there was danger of even the necessity of a First Cause being overlooked. Men were tired of the profitless wrangles, and devoted themselves to ethics, a sphere in which there appeared some chance of attaining certainty. The Epicureans earned the name of atheists among the Christians; to the Stoics God was a breath mingled up in the world, though true orthodoxy seems to have known of a mysterious external existence (τὸ ὄν); to the Platonist He

was an abstraction. Similarly, to-day there is no clear recognition of the necessity of a changeless and eternal Being, without whom progress, moral or physical, is meaningless.

It has been necessary to say at least this much in order to make clear exactly what attitude St. Justin, the most tolerant of the apologists, took towards philosophy. His toleration may be easily overstated; for, while he did commend the philosophic conceptions and phrases, he certainly did not give his *imprimatur* to philosophic theory. He refines and philosophises the Jewish conception of God; but He does not accept the Absolute. He believes that the Word of God inspired Socrates and Heracleitus; but he does not accept Heracleitus's view of the Logos. His attitude is: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." He does not believe that by searching they found out God, he does not praise their speculative investigations; he believes that the Word revealed Himself to them.

Here again we seem a long way from modern terminology. What do we mean by "reveal"? To-day, we look on revelation, intuition, or faith, as something weak and unreliable. Yet, as we look back over history, can we feel so sure that reason is likely to give us the truth? Have we any guarantee that this time we are right, and that the theories will not all have to be melted down again? Of course we have no such guarantee; reason has never proved itself a firmer guide than faith. It is the intuitions of the soul which have remained the same for centuries, while kingdoms rose and fell. The God of the Jews was found by faith; relying on Him, they lived adventurous lives; and their faith has survived Babylonia, Assyria, and all the sciences and imperialisms of the past. Similarly, to St. Justin faith in Christ was the one reality, and, rely-

ing on Him, he set out, unlike the apologist of to-day, to restate modern thought in the terms of Christian faith. The essence of faith we shall consider later; meanwhile we must study the audacious claim to set Hellenic philosophy right, and see whether we cannot make the same claim to-day.

St. Justin's position was something like this: "We Christians also believe in your Logos, this purpose running right through the ages. You are right in supposing that it is akin to human reason; for the Logos is a Person. He revealed Himself to the Jewish prophets just as He revealed Himself to Socrates and Heracleitus. He is the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world. But if you would know more about Him, you must study the Jewish Scriptures; for these are they which prophesied of Him, not as philosophers who speculate, but as messengers worthy to be believed. Finally, after many generations of revelation, He became personally incarnate on this earth as Jesus of Nazareth, who, as you know, was crucified in the reign of Tiberius when Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judæa."

We have already discussed St. Justin's philosophy of history, the progressive spiritual education of the race by contact with the Word of God. But it would have been not only a philosophical, but a tactical mistake of the highest order to confine this experience to the Jews, a race which the Greeks regarded as barbarians. The function of the Logos, therefore, is made to include all mankind. That this was easy enough at that time is obvious from the histories of Greece and the Jews. Both had been subjected to the same Babylonian and Persian influences, and these, with perhaps others from even farther east, formed an integral part of Stoicism. The doctrine of the Word itself may have been borrowed by the Greeks from Persian sources.

In any case, St. Justin does not accept the Greek conception of the Word; it is modified in the Philonic direction; but there is still a huge gap between the two ideas. It was mainly the Stoic phraseology that St. Justin used; but nothing could have been more distasteful to the Stoic mind than the new view of the Logos. It was now made a superhuman being with a distinct personality, an archetypal man who had presided over the fortunes of the race from the beginning: this is very different from the immanent soul of the universe, which was something less than human, and in whom personality would have been a weakness.

We must notice, again, how close this almost Buddhist shrinking from personality is to modern thought. The main difficulty is the admission of personality and humanity as real as that of Jesus Christ into the being of God. The objections of Celsus read as if they were penned yesterday for the Rationalist Press Association: God will no more leave His state of blessedness for us and become human than He will listen to the croaking of frogs; the world and all it contains is beneath His notice, and He will not deign even to destroy it. He views the hopes, despairs, aspirations, and sins of mortality with a Stoic heedlessness. For if, says Celsus, He desired to help mankind why does He not do so, as He promised through Moses? Christ is crucified, and no one is a penny the better—nay, rather worse. But God, if He willed, could exercise His power, and sweep away all our sin and misery; therefore He does not will. Here is really the crux of the whole matter. The philosopher is unwilling to attribute personality to God; but, if he did so, his ideal of deity was summed up in strength. He looked to see, in the Divine Ruler of the heavens, a more splendid Cæsar. If God cared for the world He would rule it well; but God does not rule it well, and therefore

does not care for it. Therefore the Incarnation is ridiculous.

This, of course, is very superficial; for if God is infinite, He must also be infinitesimal. An infinite God Who takes no interest in frogs is not infinite; besides, it shirks the question of how the frogs got there. However much it strove to be monist, the Stoic position failed, for it made a moral divorce between creation and God; God was not responsible for the world. It was a mark of the age, and even many Christians, when posed with the question of who made the frogs, were tempted to answer, "At any rate, not the good God." But it was the special virtue of orthodox Christianity that, in the face of science and philosophy, it fought alone for the belief that a good and infinite God had created the universe. This is the fundamental conception of Jewish faith, and a necessary foundation of a true moral and personal religion. What sort of gods were they to whom their Roman votaries breathed prayers they did not wish their neighbours to hear? The main message of Christianity to the heathen world was this view of the person of God, and the apologists spend as much time insisting on it as they do on the Incarnation. With the philosophical advance in the conception of God the belief in the possibility of personal relationship with Him had died out. The age was sick because it was without God, and so is ours. The idea came back to them with the belief in the Incarnation, and so it will to us.

The Incarnation was a pledge of two things, God's love for the world and the existence of love within His own being. The absolute God of the philosophers was so absolute as to be unable even to act. He was incapable of passion, so love was not to be dreamed of. The Christian idea of Father and Son was repellent to them; but it set Him free from the fetters of philosophy, by

interpreting Him, not in terms of physics, but in terms of personality. The essence of personality was declared to be love, not force, and all the materials for the solution of the puzzle were present. But it can scarcely be maintained that philosophy supplied them. The difference between Christianity and philosophy is that philosophy began by searching for God, and Christianity began by having found Him. Faith had brought the Christian to his knowledge of God, and when he had found Him he discovered Him to be the same God after whom the philosophers were feeling. The intuitions of the philosophers were all right; it was only their philosophy that was astray. It is typical that the Christians especially praised Socrates, whose bias was against speculation.

The Christians then proceeded to claim the philosophers as inspired witnesses to Christianity. Their Logos was the Son; their God was the Father. They had already the theology of Philo to guide them. But to these philosophers the Logos was necessary for the existence of the world only; to the Christian he was necessary for the existence of God. His system was theocentric, not anthropocentric. A Mind conceiving an idea is a very different thing from a Person begetting a Son. And, for the Christian, the Son was necessary to the Father as an object of His love. "The same was in the beginning face to face with God," and He too "was God." He was another in number, not in consciousness. We thus get the conception of one infinite God active in love from all eternity owing to the multiplicity of His personality. It is very curious that the second-century theologians do not seem to be aware of the problem they have solved.

It is necessary to note here that "Son" and "Father" are just as much metaphors as "Mind" and "Word"; but Sonship is a better metaphor because it implies

the real distinction in personality without which interchange of relations would be impossible. The Christian view of life is love—that is to say, a continual giving out of oneself, a pouring out of personality; this highest life can only be possible for God if there is in Him a fountain or source of this self-sacrificing energy, a recipient of equal power and importance, and the actual energy itself. But, as this occurs on the plane of moral personality rather than on that of physics, the best metaphor must be taken from the family and the love of a good father for a good son. The metaphor of Word or Wisdom is less good; for while, on the one hand, it kept up the intellectual level of Christian thought, so that it never degenerated to the level of such family gods as Attis and Osiris, and, on the other, it opened a great door into the Church for the philosophers, it let in far too many who took a lower view of the Word as an inferior being who was called into existence to mediate between God and the world. The extreme Arians were simply heathen philosophers, who never had the true conception of the Trinity at all. St. Justin Himself is led away by the use of the words Logos and Angelos, to represent the Second Person as a subordinate being, though, where he is not philosophising, his language is clear enough.

It is unnecessary for our purpose to go into the long chains of theological argument by which the relationship between the Father and the Son was established. There was as yet no adequate armoury of terms; Tertullian settled the terminology of the West, and it is in Theophilus that we first find the word Trinity (quite casually). But this is only of interest to theologians; it was not as a solution of the philosophical puzzle that this doctrine of the Trinity conquered the world, but as a worthy co-ordination of faith in God the Father and Creator of men, in Jesus of Nazareth whom we serve, and in the

comforting Spirit whose help we know in our lives. As Donne says, it is—

"Bones to philosophy, but milk to faith."

The *locus classicus* is the beautiful passage in the apology *To Diognetus*. "Did He send Him, as a man might think, on a mission of domination and fear and terror? Indeed He did not; but in gentleness and meekness He sent Him, as a king sending his own son who is himself a king; He sent Him as God, He sent Him as Man to men, He sent Him with the idea of saving, of persuading, not of forcing; for force is not an attribute of God."

Now see how different this moral conception is from that of Celsus, who would have an Emperor-God, either indifferent or ruling firmly. Like men to-day, he demanded a strong administrator as his ideal; he could see that the world of physics and astronomy was a world of law rigorously working itself out, while the moral world, the world of men, was pure anarchy. This could only mean to him indifference. Faith carried the Jew to a higher point; however adverse the circumstances might be, God was still to be trusted. From the Incarnation the Christian learned the truth that God loved the world, but that love did not consist in forcing men to be good. They were to go their own way, live their own lives, work out their own salvation (or damnation), and follow their own light, which is enough to walk by, if not to see by. A single coercive touch from the hand of God, and they would lose the dignity of man, and become automata. God desires with an infinite desire to see the world go right; He does not desire to push it right.

As a result of this neutrality on the part of God the world is full of pain, sorrow, and injustice, the vast majority of which is owing to the greed, carelessness, and

pride of men; and it always seems that the good have to suffer most. Christianity neither denies nor explains the presence of pain; it explains nothing in the world, it only accepts it. But it said that the art of suffering was the most arduous and godlike task in the world. The early writers nowhere, as far as I know, deny nobility to him who returns blow for blow; they merely asserted that the more godlike part was to accept it; and no one will deny it is harder. In addition, they pointed to the Crucifixion, where they had their pledge that God suffered with them, and identified Himself, not with force and strength, but with the broken and weak of the world.

Further they did not go. They boldly stated that God had created the world as it stands; and what corruption there was came from sin, human or dæmonic. Over this sin the Holy Spirit gave them power. In spite of their dark and puritanic outlook, they furiously denounced those who made the material world evil or illusory. They had a perspective; they saw the world as a sane and reasonable process with an end in view, the Good Time Coming, as Professor Burkitt paraphrases it. And when this day came (and all the arts of metaphor and picture-language were exhausted in describing its lurid glories) the probation would be over, God would be justified, and all put right. They devoutly hoped and believed it was coming in their own lifetime.

This was the point of view that found in the doctrine of the Son of God its logical centre. Everything began from "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." But to the Roman officials, educated perhaps in Greece, it was ridiculous. Trained to regard Rome and her *Kultur* as the greatest fruit of whatever divinity might be working through humanity, they could only see goodness in justice, law, force, and uniformity. Those who were the passive objects of justice, force, law, and

uniformity saw things with different eyes. They rejoiced to learn that the heavens were governed by a different Emperor, who was on the side of the " bottom dog " ; and that of Him force was no attribute.

Such a God was a real personality, flesh and blood as one might say, a real father, a real hope ; He was no abstraction, or absolute, or idea. After all the philosophy of St. Justin, He remains a gracious and kingly figure, no stream of tendencies making for righteousness, but a good Samaritan, ready to die for man. He has personally watched over the world He made, and at every mistake or blunder of man has felt the sorrow of disappointed love. By His Son He spake through the prophets and philosophers ; His Son was made one with us, and died with us on Calvary ; and when we pray, He gives us the company of His Spirit. Such a God, they believed, answered the philosophic questions of the age, and solved the puzzle of the universe. But no one is converted by having his metaphysical difficulties solved ; usually he does not want them solved. The Jew was reluctant to see his prophecies fulfilled in Christ, because it deprived him of his promises : he loved the prophecies more than what they promised him. So the Hellene was unwilling to give up his philosophy ; he prized his doubts far more than the answer. Besides, each stood in a definite moral attitude to the world, and, whatever logic might prove, he did not want to go to the trouble of changing it. Such a change is a moral act, and must have a moral cause ; faith must come into it.

When you are teaching a boy to swim, and have got him down to the water, and have taught him how it is done, and proved that it is possible, there only remains one thing : that is, for the boy to summon up faith and courage from I know not where, and jump in, and swim too. And the best thing you can do is to get in and

swim with him, for the strongest argument will be the sight of others swimming; nay, the more he talks about it and looks at it, the less he likes it, so that there is only one thing for him to do, which is to jump in quickly.

This applies to all businesses in life, and not least to religion. The most powerful argument is the sight of others living Christian lives; and, when all the philosophical objections to Christianity are shown to be baseless, there is only one thing to do, not to change one's mind, but to change one's life; for more discussion tends to less action. This business is like swimming, for there is a definite leap to be taken from one position to another, and it is a matter of moral attitude towards the universe. The religious man is a gambler, an adventurer—that is, a man of action; he treads on, and finds his path surrounded with practical evidences, which at every moment support his faith.

We cannot prove that the Christian view of God is true; we can prove that if a man wants to believe in a good God, Christianity is the only way it has ever been done. "For there is no other Name given among men whereby they may be saved, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIANITY AND SUPERSTITION

" If the absurdity of their theology were confined to saying that the gods were created, and owed their constitution to water . . . I might proceed to the remaining charges.

" But, on the other hand, they have described their bodily forms: speaking of Hercules as a dragon, of others as hundred-handed, of the daughter of Zeus, whom he begat of his mother Rhea, or of Demeter having two eyes in the natural order and two in her forehead, and the face of an animal on the back part of her neck. . . .

" And on the other hand, they have described their admirable achievements; how Kronos, for instance, mutilated his father and hurled him down from his chariot, and how he murdered his children and swallowed the males of them. . . ."—ATHENAGORAS: *Embassy*, XX.

" And if you speak of the mother of those who are called gods, far be it from me to utter with my lips her deeds, or the deeds of those by whom she is worshipped (for it is unlawful for us so much as to name such things), and what vast taxes and revenues she and her sons furnish to the King. For these are not gods, but idols, as we have already said, the work of men's hands and unclean demons."—THEOPHILUS: *To Autolycus*, i, x.

" So by a contagion that walketh in the like darkness do demons and evil angels blast the minds of men, and agitate them with furies and extravagant uncleannesses, and dart in outrageous lusts with a mixture of various errors; the most capital of which is that, having taken possession of a soul, they recommend to it the worship of false gods, that by the fumes of those sacrifices they may procure a banquet for themselves, the stench of the flesh, and the fumes of the blood being the proper repast of those unclean spirits."—TERTULLIAN: *Apology*, xxii.

" But gods they are, say you; for the truth of this we appeal from your words to your conscience; let that be our judge, and let that condemn us if you can deny all those you now worship for gods once to have been men. If you can be strenuous in denying this, you shall be convinced of the mistake from your own antiquities testifying against

them to this very day, from the cities where they were born, and the countries where they left the impressions of their frailty; and, alas, where the very tombs of the immortals are shown."—TERTULLIAN: *Apology*, x.

"The devils no sooner heard this baptism spoken of by the prophet (Ezek. xxxvi. 25) but they too set up their baptisms, and made such as go to their temples, and officiate in their libations and meat offerings, first sprinkle themselves with water by way of lustration."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology*, lxxxi.

"In our coming in and our going out, when we put on our shoes, when we wash, when we eat, when we kindle the lights, when we sleep, when we sit down, whatever business occupies us, we sign our forehead with the sign of the cross."—TERTULLIAN: *On the Crown*, iii.

V. CHRISTIANITY AND SUPERSTITION

THE attitude adopted towards the many religions of the Empire was one of uncompromising hostility. St. Justin bitterly complains that the devils have stolen and parodied the Christian mysteries; Tertullian is full of fiery invective against their filthiness, absurdity, and immorality. We found sympathy shown towards the philosophers; but there is no hint that the devotees of Isis or Cybele are also feeling after God if haply they may find Him.

One practical aspect of this contrast is that Christianity could only be established on the ruins of these religions; the philosopher might retain his cloak, philosophy might be captured for Christianity, but the false religions were to be definitely abjured. A Christian could no longer eat at the table of Lord Serapis; and, even if he had regarded the deity as an aspect of the truth, that would be little consolation for the wholesale desertion of his altars. As organisations, the heathen systems were bound to be the Church's most determined enemies.

Just, too, as Christianity found enemies in the popular superstitions, so it found a possible ally in philosophy.

With all their great differences, Christianity and philosophy stood in some things together and alone; chiefly in their reverence for the supreme Being, the life of self-sacrifice, and their hostility to the common religions. From the pages of Christian apologist and Roman satirist alike, we construct a picture of them so dark and sinister that we are tempted to write it down at once as incredible. If we are to trust Juvenal or St. Paul, as later on Ammianus or St. Jerome, society was so deeply corrupted that reformation must have seemed impossible. And on the human side Christians were pessimists, really regarding reform as impossible; on the divine side they looked to a fiery judgment, and the sure and certain hope of the Kingdom.

In historical investigations, however, we must be careful not to take satiric and prophetic diatribes too literally. It is only in one mood that the religious mind sees that "all the world lies in the evil one." It was the same Christianity that maintained, in the face of all its opponents, that creation was good, and it was Tertullian himself who called the soul into the witness-box to proclaim itself Christian-born. To-day we are a little apt to decry the virulence of Christian opposition to heathenism on the grounds that it was not far from the kingdom of heaven, that Christianity borrowed from heathen systems as it did from philosophy, and that, after all, they were already discredited.

On the last score it is easy enough for a modern professor to see that heathen cults were bound to disappear before Christianity; he has the advantage over Tertullian in knowing how it happened: and it is always easier to understand a century when you have the history of the succeeding ones by way of commentary. But, in the second century itself, heathenism showed no lack of vitality. The philosopher hated and de-

spised it, but he was afraid to say so. The Roman official revered, if he did not believe in, the gods that had made his country great. Any strolling priest or quack doctor could drive a roaring trade. Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonoteichus found paganism a paying business. The explanation of this success is what concerns us here; and I fancy the clue will lie rather in the unchanging facts of psychology than in the precise details of the mysteries of Mithras, or the Magna Mater.

Mithraism is, on the face of it, the best of the cults; its language is pure and elevated, and its ritual is evidence of a striving for strength and goodness. But, for all that, we cannot place it as a religion alongside the great religions of the world. If pure and elevated language were sufficient test of a religion, then Freemasonry would be perhaps the most powerful and spiritual religion of to-day. But Freemasonry is not a religion at all; it is a society for mutual benefit. But, by its claims to antiquity, and by its real world-wide character, it answers many of the religious needs of the human heart, the desire for brotherhood, law, ritual, and the possession of a secret; for many people it takes the place of religion, and it is recognised by at least one branch of the Church as a definite antagonist of Christianity.

Despite our small knowledge of Mithraism we can be quite certain that it was of this character. We know that it existed in Rome in the first century, and that St. Justin condemns it in the second as pseudo-Christian; but our real knowledge of it comes rather from the third, when we find its remains widespread. It has gone hand in hand with the deification of the Emperor, and has thus become the soldiers' religion; the army is knit by it into a great brotherhood with baptismal and other rites like those of Christianity. Its pre-

eminence at this time as the only serious rival to Christianity is undoubtedly due to its ideals of purity and truth; yet, as far as we know, it never produces a hero, a saint, a prophet, a doctor, or a martyr. It is a formless cult, a centreless secret society, without object or distinguishable cause, that sprang up solely to satisfy certain vague human aspirations. It makes no protest on being absorbed into Christianity. The army is heathen under Diocletian, monotheist under Constantius, Christian under Constantine, Arian under his son, and pagan again under Julian. There is obviously a vast body of men who are quite indifferent to what particular secret society they happen to belong, and Christianity itself, as its bonds of discipline weaken, is ready to come to terms with them.

What we know of armies would not lead us to suppose that the popular freemasonry of their heterogeneous sons would really prove to be a spiritual bond of the highest order. The savage prays his god to make him "good" or "glad" or "strong." The baptisms, the initiation tortures, the tauroctony of Mithraism show that the same idea was at work here; but, in addition to this, we see truth, justice, and purity, together with a desire for spiritual illumination, and, possibly, to be at one with God. This the religion owed to its Persian origin, and in this excelled the Isis mysteries; though we may doubt, perhaps, how far the barbarian legionary sometimes understood this part of his religion. In other words, it contained something which satisfied, or tried to satisfy, the religious cravings of the soul.

The second century, in which this religion developed, was a most religious epoch. The Augustan revival of ancestral piety had failed; but the death of the homely and sober Latin religion had given place to the world-worship of Rome and the Emperor. Under his broad-

minded patronage the cults of Egypt, Greece, and the East established themselves throughout the world, and no artificial separation is to be made between the nationalities of these various deities. In the year 100 B.C. the process of blending had already begun in the commercial area of the Eastern Mediterranean. The third century saw Rome's admission into this federation; in 205 B.C. the process culminated in the transference to Rome of the fetish stone of the Magna Mater of Central Asia Minor. The Orontes had long flowed into the Tiber; under the Empire it overflowed its banks.

These religions were just such as to flourish among the quick and excitable Italians. They had a luxurious and exhilarating ritual, a mysterious system of sacramental dramas, through which was accomplished a salvation or redemption which set one right with the unseen powers. One felt better; there was satisfaction of the senses; sight and scent and sound combined often with something cruder. It is a common illusion to suppose that some purely physical sensation is of a religious nature; we see it to-day in the ecstatic hymn-singing of the revivalist, the artist's devotion to beauty, or the nature-worship of the simple life. All these and many more mistake the satisfaction of purely physical desire for the attainment of religious beatitude; they often have the illusion that this ecstasy is spiritual. Nevertheless, to use the epigram of Oscar Wilde, they are curing the senses by means of the soul and the soul by means of the senses. The devotee of Isis saw something done, and underwent a definite experience which really satisfied him. A good play or a football match has the same result.

This sense of physical desire and satisfaction, for which we seem to have no word in the English language (let us call it rapture), was the method of salvation.

Rapture was something mysterious, and a gift of the gods; for instance, it was inconceivable that any liquor should give the rapturous sensation of semi-drunkenness: it must be a god. Worse methods than these were resorted to; frenzy at the sight of blood was a common incident in the orgies, and Mithraism never shook this off. In some cults the worshipper was worked up to a condition of madness by methods we can scarcely think of to-day. Catullus laments the prevalence of the cult of Cybele, and draws a portrait of the young Roman who has committed a rash act, and cut himself off for ever from the sane enjoyments of the city.

> Egone a mea remota hæc ferar in nemora domo ?
> Patria, bonis, amicis, genitoribus, abero ?
> Abero foro palæstra, stadio et gymnasiis ?

The contrast between the plain severity of Roman discipline and enjoyment and the licentiousness of the Phrygian worship is very well done. If the majority of Eastern cults had been like this, no Juvenal could have painted things too black; as a matter of fact, they were not, though in a terrible number the sexual element predominated.

The cults had to answer so many cravings that they could not be all of one kind, and that, after all, repulsive to a great majority of respectable citizens. They had to cater for every one and find a way out of all the dark enigmas of life. There were other elements that came in. In an age, for instance, when the principles of medicine were little understood, both illness and remedy were looked on as supernatural; and Æsculapius or Apollo, his father, had their priests on earth to dispense these mysteries. Every kind of success, too, was looked on as a gift from some capricious deity who needed to be propitiated and flattered; it was

even believed that the god might deign to announce beforehand what the success of any particular venture might be, and oracular answers were eagerly sought. It was felt that there must be ways of averting the dangers and pains of life, if only one got on the right side of the spiritual powers.

There were found then, as there are to-day, men and women with mediumistic powers, who were ready at a price to foretell the future or summon up spirits. Many of the mysteries brought one face to face with the supernatural; and witchcraft was a fact of common experience. Modern science is puzzled by these phenomena; and far the easiest and most natural solution is to suppose that there is indeed contact with the unseen world of some kind. In those days no one had any doubt on the subject; and even Christians were forced to admit the truth of heathen prophecy.

The religion of the average citizen was eclectic. He seldom rose to the conception of one supreme deity of whom Isis and Serapis were but aspects; but he very seldom differentiated his gods. They all worked, and he chose the one that worked best. One cult was very like another. He was initiated into the mysteries of Mithras or Attis; he inquired the future of any local prophet or wise woman; he sat at table with any god to whom his friends might invite him; he experimented with any new and curious worship; and he applied to Æsculapius or the Dea Tussis if he was ill. Human nature demands a kind of ritual at the grand climaxes of life—birth, maturity, marriage, or death; and, in the face of all these new cults, the old religion became powerless to supply it.

The mysteries of birth are far the most inexplicable phenomena of ordinary life, at once the most holy and horrible of human secrets. It is no wonder that they should inspire the greatest awe, and form the darkest

centre of the most powerful religions. It is equally natural that this should lead to the most appalling and ruinous moral catastrophe. But it lies at the root of so much that we call Rapture, the development of life, and the yearning for the supernatural, that it is not hard to see it as the thread which runs through the most diverse cults of that day and this. We even find it (inverted) in the fierce dualism and asceticism of the Gnostic and Manichean cults and heresies.

To the Christian, as to the heathen, all these cults were equally valid; not knowing that in the sixth century they would all be (more or less) antiquated, he could only regard them as the darkest and most dangerous phenomena of social life. He himself had been converted from them; and he could not commit the absurdity of denying his own previous experience. He compared their fruits with those of Christianity, and unhesitatingly denounced his previous religion as devil-worship. It was the only course open to him, as he was not yet sophisticated enough to invent a "subliminal self" with which to explain these perplexing phenomena.

Whatever theory does explain them, it will readily be granted by the most materialistic investigator that the belief in the actual existence of these spirits is a very natural deduction to have drawn; and, in the second century it was the only one to draw. The belief that the spirits were evil was only a further deduction from the facts. The suggestions often made at modern *séances*, and the lives and deaths of some mediums to-day, show that the moral standard either of the spirits or the subliminal self is very low. There is, in fact, sufficient warrant for connecting, at any rate, a great deal of this business with the (potentially) immoral desires which underlie so many of these religions.

To the pagan devotee, the supernatural authority

was sufficient to legitimise the practices concerned; to the Christians, it was the evil nature of the practices that discredited the supernatural authority. Neither side disbelieved in the supernatural element. To Celsus, as much as to the apologists, witchcraft and miracles were among the accepted phenomena of life; but to the philosopher, as to the Christian, they were no evidence of the divine. It was possible in the nineteenth century to believe that there was nothing supernatural behind them; to have done this under the conditions of the second century would have been to shut one's eyes to fact.

Exactly how far these bad elements predominated in the religions of the Empire it is quite impossible to say. Apart from the element of fraud, much spiritualism, fortune-telling, and cultus is comparatively innocent; yet a proverb about playing with edged tools suggests itself. Most people's religion must have been a very mild playing indeed; and there was plenty of prophylactic religion in the shape of Semitic or Persian sects which sought an absolute escape from the perils of the flesh. Yet this scorn of the material often leads up to excesses quite comparable with those of the fleshly cults, and at times has an odd way of being almost indistinguishable from them. It is much the same in the end to be entirely spiritual as to be entirely fleshly; physical ecstasy is often mistaken for absorption into God.

Again, much religion insisted on a morality. Nothing is to be more regretted than our loss of the moral teaching of Mithraism. The main points are summed up as follows by Cumont: "Ils prêchaient de même une morale impérative, tenaient l'asceticisme pour méritoire, et mettaient au nombre des vertus principales l'abstinence, la continence, le renoncement, et l'empire sur lui-même." This was combined with rites so like the

Christian ones that St. Justin declares that they are copied from Christianity. Indeed, the Empire was full of gorgeous and decadent cults that all recall Christianity with their legends of dying gods and risen saviours. Modern criticism sometimes suggests that Christianity borrowed from them; but this is impossible to prove, and there is little real relation between the humiliation of the Son of Man and the pageant of the dying year.

The roaring success of religion in the second century is the most important of all the signs of the times; any quack doctor, prophet, or enthusiast could easily establish himself and drive a roaring trade, from the papal Alexander of Abonoteichos to the lowest of the—

> Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ,
> Mendici, mimæ, balatrones, hoc genus omne.

All ranks of society found themselves trying to satisfy the soul in much the same way; and the century comes to a close under Mammæa and the Syrian Emperors, Philip and the unspeakable Elagabalus. But by this time the long Vanity Fair was coming to an end; the world was weary, and Christianity alone remained for the heroic, with Mithraism for the faint-hearts.

When the Christian said, therefore, that the whole world was in the power of devils, he was not indulging in a mere luxury of puritanic pessimism, but stating what seemed an obvious fact. All human society was worshipping powers which were evil; not only were they evil in practice, but the very myths on which they nourished their souls were full of the most horrible murders and adulteries. Socrates and Diogenes were better men than Zeus and Apollo; and even the Roman Emperors must have raised the tone of the pantheon on their elevation to Olympus. And against this universal domination of the powers of evil, Christianity,

and Christianity only, stood firm—for the philosophers were afraid.

The great point is that, whatever virtues we may now be able to see in the cults, and however innocent Mithraism, for instance, may actually be, they were all tarred with the same brush. They were none of them even neutral. What was the good of preaching an imperative morality, if you failed to condemn the rites of Cybele or the temple of Antinous? All these gods of the pantheon were discredited by each other's company; it must be an awful truth of which Serapis was one aspect, and Antinous another. And, in addition to this, they all, Mithraism especially, acquiesced in Emperor-worship. There was no room for sympathy in the Christian's dealing with this company of gods, who, as a matter of fact, by this time were all being identified with one another; the cults could only be regarded as a whole, and, as they had the worst influence on the life of the Empire, it was necessary to clear them away. This task the Emperor was unable to perform; he definitely ranged himself as divine patron of the deities. Christianity swept them all into oblivion.

It was this intolerant attitude of Christianity that saved the Empire; it is a mistaken idea of Christian charity which strains it to include tolerance of wrong opinion or religion. Christianity is the strait and narrow way which leads to eternal life, and it is no charity to desert it for the broad highway, or even to allow others to tread the "primrose path to the everlasting bonfire" without that warning which the age-long experience of Christianity is so well able to give. Christianity saved the Empire because it witnessed, even with its blood, to the truth; but it was not trying to save the Empire, its business was to bear witness to the truth.

To-day we should no doubt call the Church of that age puritan; it is a matter of reproach that the Chris-

tians are cold and dead to all the glories of art. They have little but scorn, satire, and hatred for the glories of Greece; their antagonism to "idols" surpasses in activity and virulence even that of the Jews. They appear on the scene as dark, dour people who hate all the pleasures of life, even the baths. They spend their time in praying and psalm-singing, awaiting the Day of terrible vengeance in which they will at last be justified. Into some such position their terror of the sensuous and the idolatrous led them; they distrusted bodily pleasures, and fled every occasion of sin. St. Augustine is doubtful even of the severe Ambrosian hymns; and St. Jerome forswore Vergil. All this is true; but we must beware of trusting too implicitly men like Tertullian or St. Jerome, whose ascetic zeal went almost beyond what Christianity allows. The average Christian was no fakir.

It is not its negative side which explains the policy and success of Christianity. If we compare the spread of Christianity (or Mohammedanism) with the spread of Isis-worship, we find the two monotheistic religions have something which Isis-worship has not. They have (or claim to have) the truth; a man becomes a Christian because he believes Christianity to be true, but a man becomes an enthusiast for Isis because he thinks it is nice. Christianity brings one into a new, absolute, and final relation with the truth.

What is religion? To the Christian (as to the Jew and the Mohammedan) it is a personal relation with a moral Being. Prayer and sacrament make up the daily round of intercourse with Him; and religion itself consists in a reliance on Him and a constant self-adjustment to His will. This deliberate alteration of will affects not only the moments of prayer, but decides the most momentous issues of life, so that all one's actions are accommodated to the will of God. The

Christian is warned that this will certainly lead to a life of crucifixion, self-sacrifice, and perhaps death; but the same God who raised up Jesus Christ will give the strength to go through.

The heathen went to church to feel better after it; he wanted to be satisfied. He prayed to God for health and strength and success; he tried to find out his future, and, if possible, to influence it. But, if he had bad luck, he changed his god; his religion was like a large insurance society which he joined for the benefits. He also found his religious and moral aspirations satisfied. The best that can be said for this religion is that it might be harmless; it was certainly not going to stand against Christianity.

Christianity felt that its nearest relationship was not with the cults, but with the philosophers. Yet the philosophers were too far removed on the other side. They had no sympathy for the ordinary doubts and weaknesses of human nature. The wise man was to be totally unmoved by any accident, good or evil, that might occur to him or his friends. He was not, therefore, to go running about from god to god, or to bemoan his fate like a stage-player. He was to practise self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*) and impassibility (*ἀπάθεια*) and depend on no man or god for happiness.

This ideal was barely possible, and, if carried out, would have produced an inhuman type, as it did in the Christian hermits of a later generation. It failed by its very strength; it was utterly impossible for a good man to maintain a Buddhist indifference with regard to the human tragedy of the world around him, and his idea of independence violated the fundamental conceptions of mundane existence. It was not possible to be independent; it was only possible to produce an exclusive caste. To do the philosophers justice, they were better than their creed. No one can help realising

the sad nobility of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius; and the picture he draws of his adoptive father is the picture of the most beautiful and tender type of monasticism. We are able to see in it the *anima naturaliter Christiana.*

Again, whatever page of Marcus one opens, the eye is almost sure to fall on a reference to death; he dwells on the fact that it is natural, that it is a transition, a door, a mere change, and that there is no need to be frightened of it. He does this so often that it impresses one at last with the fact that death is not natural, that it is very violent, and that there is every reason to be afraid of it. If he had really regarded it as the natural and dignified exit he describes, he would have insisted on it a little less; but, as a fact, he must have been as apprehensive of it as Dr. Johnson. Dignity is incompatible with sublunary existence, even for an Emperor. He strained nobly, however, to regard it like a philosopher, and his one allusion to the Christians (whom he allowed or ordered to be unmercifully persecuted) is a reference to the indecent glee with which they embraced martyrdom.

The aristocratic system, at this time, was producing a very good type indeed. We English ought especially to recognise this, as we choose to educate our own aristocracy on just those classical authors which Marcus Aurelius read, rather than on the Old and New Testaments of Tertullian. The result is that we produce very much the type of the Roman gentleman. It is ridiculous to suppose that Roman society is summed up in some such epigram as—

> "On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell:
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell."

The long descriptions of voluptuous banquets and

self-indulgence, the immoral habits, the licentiousness and delirium of the mystery religions, the general *mise-en-scène* of love, liquor, and luxury, is all legitimate "atmosphere" of its kind. It is far more important to realise that in the second century Rome reached its zenith. We should recall the scientific spirit of Julius Cæsar, Pliny, or Lucian, the noble philosophy with which Marcus found himself surrounded, the settlement of the bounds of the Empire under Hadrian, one of the world's greatest rulers, and the high level of civilisation throughout the known world. It is worth while recalling Trajan's little note to Pliny: "Secret informers," he says, "are evil, and unworthy of our age." Here he lays claim to an advance on the previous age, the age of Domitian, and the claim was justified. It is true that there was no constructive thought or art, but it is questionable how far this is a sign of vigour or decadence.

But an aristocracy, even when it is as cosmopolitan as that of Rome, contains the seeds of its own ruin. By isolating the goodness and enlightenment of the nation, it makes it impossible for the goodness and enlightenment to save the nation. The enlightened caste dies out, having scattered no seed. So it was in the Empire; the rulers saw clearly the errors of the idol-worshipping multitude, but had no gospel or hope for them. They could only legitimise all the superstitions, and bind them in one by the worship of the genius of Rome and the Empire. The one true religion, which alone had a message to the democracy, and could have saved the Empire, they proscribed.

There were, of course, many who retained their belief in the old gods; and all conformed. A sympathetic picture of the latter is given in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. The Roman aristocrat continued to pay his vows to the gods who had made his city and family

great. Just as many Englishmen used to adhere to the Anglican Church simply because it was the religion of England so, to the Roman, religion and patriotism were one. It was the gods who had made Rome great; and their temples were not to be forsaken. Not all Romans were philosophers; and to them the *antiqua pietas* was as dear as their city or Imperium.

Yet, strive as they would, it was not the old-fashioned piety of their ancestors that survived. Greek religion had long displaced it, and the second century saw oriental religion triumph through and over that. The new cults were irresistible; the chief supporter of Alexander of Abonoteichus was a Roman senator, Publius Mummius; Sisenna and Marcus himself consulted him before going to war; what is more, his faith survived the falsification of his predictions. It seems probable that the most conservative of officials must have believed in the new superstitions. The deified Emperor was identified with Sol Invictus, or Mithras; and, in the pagan revival of 361, it is the new gods that Julian introduces.

All this goes to show how widespread was the "demon-worship" of the Empire; in face of its power and universality neither Christian nor philosopher could deny it. One of the most interesting passages in Tertullian is the challenge to produce a man suffering from devil-possession whom the Christians would undertake to cure. From the very beginning this had been one of the powers and signs of the Spirit. When our Lord first appeared in Galilee He won fame by His authority over spirits; this authority He solemnly handed on to the Twelve on the mountain, and in apostolic days it was counted a gift of the Spirit. An interesting case in the Acts is the cure of a girl possessed by the prophesying spirit of Apollo. According to Tertullian, Christians still possessed this power, and he was ready

to come out before a magistrate and put the demons to flight in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

The usual answer of the heathen was that Christians were not the only people who had this power; this statement must also be accepted, but at the same time it is obvious that some power out of the ordinary must have belonged to the Christians. In the same way we learn that the sons of the Pharisees cast out demons, but that our Lord had an especial and unique power. What was this power, so pre-eminently the possession of Christians, and admitted by magistrate and philosopher? It is plain that, whatever it is, it is no mechanical argument in favour of Christianity; but even if the pathological condition is purely "natural," and the curative power acts along the same lines as "telepathy" and "suggestion" (whatever they are) it is still worth while inquiring into its nature.

The same phenomena meet us on the mission field to-day; tribes who live under the fear of devils are absolutely delivered from them by Christianity. Not only are individual cases cured, but lives are delivered from their domination and terror. Nothing is more certain than that, before the advance of Christianity, these real or imaginary demonic forces are clean swept away, so much so that for a brief space in modern educated circles men ceased to believe in them; now they are creeping back as the subject of "psychical research."

It is not altogether beside the mark here to point out how Christianity itself, by its secrecy, not only incurred the accusation of being a mystery religion, but did a little assimilate itself to them. We have seen how all the apologists but one shrink from describing the Christian mysteries and ministry. Every other apologist conceals them as if they really were the horrible thing people believed them to be; St. Justin alone

reveals that there is no magic, no optical illusion, no cruel or cannibalistic sacrifice, but plain bread and wine and water, with the soberest of prayer and ritual.

It is not part of this essay to deal with the causes of the affinities between Christianity and the heathen rituals. In the poverty of our information we can only say that their extent is doubtful, their origin manifold, and that the influence of one on the other—for it seems to have acted both ways—is impossible to prove or disprove. But we can improve on St. Justin's theory that the demons parodied Christianity beforehand. It may well be that the originators of the mysteries had got hold of the right idea; like Socrates or Abraham, they may have been Christians before Christ. The faith of man may have been groping in the dark for the redemption and salvation which God has given through the Man Christ Jesus. At any rate, it is a very acute comment of St. Justin that here the devils failed in not having one of the sons of Zeus crucified in imitation of Christ.

Here lies the centre of Christianity, so that, in comparison, the cults are only gorgeous frames to enclose a picture which was yet to come; and the apologists were right to insist on what sprang out of this faith in Christ crucified, namely, the harvest of repentance and good works, its prayers for persecuting Emperor and hostile populace. If Christianity was a mystery religion like the rest, what made this difference? What made the martyrs? Why did Mithraism die out under the Christian Emperor? Why did Christianity stand out against Emperor-worship, in which all the rest acquiesced? It had something which the mysteries never had, and to which they were antagonistic. As historians, we can now look back and see the part the mysteries played in preparing the world for Christ; as

Christians, it would have been our duty to oppose them to the death.

NOTE TO CHAPTERS IV AND V

THE PAGAN CONCEPTION OF MATTER

The Persians held that matter was alien from spirit, and was under the control of an evil being who was totally opposed to the spirit of good. Hinduism in the main regards matter as an illusion to which spirit must rise superior. It was rather this latter conception that was introduced into the Roman Empire through both philosophy and religion, though Mithraism must have been nominally pledged to the Persian point of view.

In philosophy it takes the form of a rejection of creationism; matter is always regarded as existing somehow independently of God. Plato has a creation myth, but he does not represent God as creating matter by direct influence. The Stoics regard matter as a thing quite indifferent, and in consequence their morality suffers. In our own period Marcus Aurelius quotes with approbation the saying of Epictetus, that man is a living soul dragging about a corpse. As a result, even Epictetus has no very high teaching on the subject of sexual purity. The body does not matter.

In religion the effect was even worse. The great mother goddesses were regarded as personifications of the spirit which moves the world; the continuous flux and recreation of nature was represented by sexual relations between the goddess and other figures, who were regarded now as her son, husband, or brother, now as but another form of herself. On the consequences of this it is unnecessary to dwell.

For the initiate there was a different interpretation. He was led to look on life as an attempt to escape from the domination of matter; the end of his being was to be the reabsorption of his soul into the divine being from whom it was separated as long as it was imprisoned in the body. This view of the body was also held by the Christian Gnostic sects, which saw in Jesus Christ the Redeemer who was going to liberate their souls from the world and restore them to their rightful union with the infinite God. As far as this side of the mystery religions stirred a sense of sin and a desire for reconciliation they were good; as far as the mysteries satisfied this sense, they were bad. On the other hand, they despaired absolutely of the world, the cardinal sin also of eschatology.

Our Lord held a view quite the reverse of this, as we see from the famous discourse, only too fatally clear, in the eighth chapter of St. Mark. It is summed up at its shortest in the epigrammatic phrase, "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." Any other religious teacher of the age would have said, "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is strong." Heathenism regarded the flesh as

an obstacle to being good; Christianity regarded it as material for being good with.

The reaction from philosophy on the part of Tatian and Tertullian is also to be explained by this. And they both point out that the superior morality of Christianity is due to this view of the body; this also explains why the apologists are so explicit on the resurrection of the body and on the creation of matter by God. But, in their theory of the origin of evil by the temptation of evil demons, we may doubt whether they have really explained this mystery, except to insist on the fact that it is due to a perversion of will somewhere, and is inherent neither in God nor in His universe. The universe is only bad where it is under the domination of an evil will.

Life is to be looked at like one of those Chinese puzzles in which little pieces of wood have to be put together to form a pattern. The pieces may be awkward in shape, the table-cloth may be uneven, the player may not have much capacity, there may be disturbing influences in the room; but there is nothing evil about the materials. We may not all be able to make the perfect pattern of the cross out of them; but we can all do the best we can.

For it is again the cross that is the key to the situation. The Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord prove that there is nothing unholy about the flesh; His cross and passion show that, whatever pain may be, it is not in itself incompatible with holiness. Nay, it shows that the mission of the saint may be, not to escape from the flesh, but to bear, more than other people, the evils it is able to inflict. "If any man would come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." Matter is the material of morality, not its main obstacle.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE

"I do not wish to be a king; I am not anxious to be rich; I decline military command; I detest sin; I am not compelled by an insatiable love of gain to go to sea; I do not contend for crowns; I am free from a mad thirst for fame; I despise death; I am superior to every kind of disease; grief does not consume my soul. Am I a slave, I endure my servitude. Am I free, I do not make a vaunt of my good birth. I see that the same sun is for all, and one death for all, whether they live in pleasure or poverty. The rich man sows, and the poor man partakes in the same sowing. The wealthiest die, and the beggars have the same limit to their lives."—TATIAN: *To the Greeks*, ii.

"Happiness consists not in exercising lordship over a neighbour, nor in wishing to have advantage of weaker men, nor in possessing wealth and using force against inferiors. Not in ways like these can a man imitate God; such ways are far removed from His Majesty."—*To Diognetus*, x.

"I must tell you, likewise, that of all men living we are the greatest promoters of peace, and bring you in the most powerful auxiliaries to establish it in your dominions, by teaching that it is impossible for any worker of iniquity, any covetous or insidious person, anyone either vicious or virtuous, to hide himself from God."—ST. JUSTIN: *Apology I*, xii.

"Therefore I prefer to honour the king, not indeed worshipping him, but praying for him. . . . As he will not have those called 'kings' whom he has appointed under himself (for 'king' is his title, and it is not lawful for another to use it), so neither is it lawful for anyone to receive worship but God only. . . . Accordingly, honour the king, be subject to him, and pray for him with a loyal mind; for, if you do this, you will do the will of God."—THEOPHILUS: *To Autolycus*, i, 11.

"Furthermore, we beseech Thee, O Lord, for the king and those that are in authority, and for the whole army, that they may be peaceably disposed towards us, in order that, leading all the rest of our life in peace and quietness, we may glorify Thee through Jesus Christ our hope."—*Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions*.

"But for us, who are stark cold and dead to all the glories upon earth, what occasion can we have for caballings? And in good truth nothing

is further from our soul than the thoughts of mixing up in state affairs or in any private designs; for we look upon ourselves as citizens of the world."—TERTULLIAN: *Apology*, xxxviii.

VI. CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE.

WE have now considered the exalted claims of Christianity, its ancient ancestry, its authority in philosophy, and its unique place among the cults of the day. It remains to deal with the relations between Church and State, which were the immediate cause of at least the two main Apologies. There is no maxim more admirable than that religion and politics should confine themselves each to its separate sphere; but, unfortunately, Christianity has always maintained that their sphere is the same. It was as a political phenomenon that Christianity first attracted the attention of the world. Religion and politics affect the same persons and the same activities, and it is inevitable that they should clash.

The deification of the Emperor seems to us now an intolerable intrusion of the State into the religious sphere; we are so accustomed to regard the two spheres as independent. In fact, however, we have exactly the same problem to-day; the State makes a claim which is just as uncompromising, even if it is not expressed in language so amazing. It is only the language of the imperial claim that shocks us; it seems incredible that anyone can ever have consented to address that sinister beast Domitian as "Dominus et Deus Noster." But our horror is entirely due to the modern Christian associations of the words. Let us remember how the whole Anglican Church prayed for George IV as "our most religious and gracious king."

It was only by a few philosophers that the word *Deus* was applied to the supreme Mind of the universe; the mysteries, it is true, had a pantheistic view of God; but in neither case did it affect the common

use of the word *Deus*. To the average person, it implied little more than a condition of beatification; strength and honour and glory and blessing were the endowment of the immortals on Mount Olympus. But they were only glorified men, and their company could be attained by men like Hercules and Romulus. A good man, even on earth, might be known as *pæne deus*. Julius Cæsar claimed the title of *divus* or divine, and Augustus, though he never assumed the title *Deus*, made ample preparation for its application to him after his death.

We must remember that no moral attributes were attached to the deities; it was merely a question of strength or wisdom. Power and force were the attributes, *par excellence*, of godhead. Power and force were the obvious privileges of the City of Rome; she was the undisputed mistress of the world. But, as time went on, the imperial city became more and more levelled to the rank of the other cities of the Empire, and the power passed into the hands of the Emperor. The stable government of the world depended more and more on his absolute power.

Thus the later government of the Empire shows the deliberate slighting of the Senate and People of Rome; she becomes more and more a great name, a holy city containing—

> "The ashes of our fathers
> And the temples of our gods."

Every god and goddess of the known world had his palace and sacred pomp somewhere in the stately streets; countless barbarian shrines were grouped about the ancient temple of Capitoline Jupiter. There were temples sacred to Victory, Faith, and Wealth. But there was one august being in whose hands the whole of this world-wide power was concentrated; there was one whom the gods permitted to exercise their

world-empire for them. He could be seen there, with his palace, and trains of attendants and incense; and he was the Emperor (Augustus, Sebastos, Worshipful), Autocrat of the World. And it is little wonder that, as well as being the supreme representative of heaven (Pontifex Maximus) he himself became *Deus* with a seat on Olympus.

At any rate, it was absolutely essential for the peace of the world that the Emperor's power should be absolute; nothing must interfere between him and the direct control of the taxes, the provinces, and, above all, the armies. There was no power on earth greater than his; he was formally enrolled as *Deus*, one of the strong powers of the world. There was no religion except that of the Jews which would raise any objection; they existed to flatter their gods, not to wield their powers. Even then, however, it was rather the *genius* (guardian spirit) of the Emperor who was worshipped so long as he was alive; when dead, he became a god by apotheosis.

To the philosopher or thinker all this business was ridiculous enough; the *Apocolocontosis* of Petronius Arbiter was a stinging satire on the apotheosis of the feeble and pedantic Claudius. But, as time went on, people acquiesced in an idea which had so much patriotic and religious sentiment behind it, and was so practical and useful. The alacrity with which it was taken up, especially in Egypt and the East, where the idea was familiar, is sufficient proof of that. The ritual of allegiance was simple; no one could object to burning a pinch of incense before the Emperor's statue. It was purely a civil and patriotic ceremony, which expressed the allegiance of the loyal subject to his Emperor as the supreme world-power. It was this one ceremony which bound together all the peoples of the Empire.

Now, in plain English, what does this mean? We have seen that it implied no theological dogmas as to the person of the Emperor, and nothing we can call worship; it simply used the ritual of religion to express that loyalty and obedience which law demands. It did not mean that the Emperor was infallible; it meant that he was always to be obeyed. Naturally no Christian could take this oath; to him, the Emperor was not the supreme power: the supreme power was the voice of God.

In reality it does not differ from the modern doctrine of the Sovereign State, the form in which we uphold to-day the doctrine of the divine right of kings. It does not state that the law is always right; it states that it is always to be obeyed. It allows of no superior authority, and recognises no excuse for disobedience. The business of the civil magistrate is not to decide right and wrong, but to administer the law. No conceivable circumstance can alter or modify its universal validity or authority. From the point of view of the State, it is easy to see how necessary this is; if any extraneous conceptions of right and wrong could modify the law in the slightest particular, there would be the end of its authority. It either is or is not to be obeyed; it is inconceivable that an oath should be extracted that the law is to be obeyed, except when the subject shall deem otherwise.

It is scarcely necessary to say that any such obedience or any such oath is quite impossible to the Christian. But it is necessary to insist that in the case of thousands this blind obedience to the State is the highest conception of duty; the State is the biggest thing they ever come across, and they deify it as an allegorical figure, or as an animal, or in the person of its ruler. They believe that the authority of the Church is derived from its Establishment; and they are quite certain that the

powers and privileges of their country are gifts from an imperial god to his favourite, and that members of their race are personally superior to those of any other.

These perilous and Pharisaic superstitions are as dangerous now as ever they were in the pagan days of Rome; and it is our duty to combat them as men combated them then. As a matter of law, Christians were in the wrong in absenting themselves from imperial festivals, or refusing to take the oath of allegiance. Tertullian, a lawyer, admitted this, but pleaded that the laws should be changed; bad laws had been changed before, and could be changed again. But such a change would have meant a complete capitulation on the part of the Emperors. It was one thing to exempt an insignificant nation like the Jews; it was another to give in to a vast international federation, embracing all classes and nationalities.

Before considering the attitude of the apologists to the State, it is worth noting that it is far more pacific than that of most Christians in the dock. The apologist was justifying his position as a respectable citizen, though the rhetoric of Tertullian must have been more irritating than mollifying. In the dock, however, as is natural, restraint was often cast aside; to all questions ("What is your name? Are you a slave? Are you a Roman citizen?") the answer would be, "I am a Christian." The martyr would then go on to say that he was not a malefactor, that he could not offer incense to the Emperor, that he had another Emperor called Christ, and that in a matter so simple there was no room for further consideration. In view of the number of fanatics who courted martyrdom, we may say that they must often have been bolder than this; and we gather from Celsus that they indulged in lurid denunciations and prophecies of the end of the world.

But Tertullian is reflecting the official mind of the

Church when he says that the Christians are the most loyal subjects of the Emperor; they pray for him, and for his officers, and for the success of his armies. They are a vast throng who fill the cities and villages and camps of the Empire; only the temples are left. What could not such an army do if it appealed to force? It could destroy the Empire merely by deserting it; for it would take most of the respectable citizens with it. Yes, the hated Christians who refused to worship the Emperor obeyed him better than the jingoistic mob.

This doctrine obviously goes back to New Testament times. Our Lord, when consulted on the question of paying the imperial taxes, practically answered that every one had to decide for himself. "Pay back to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." And the main drift of our Lord's life and teaching was undoubtedly in favour of obedience to law, however despicable the actual rulers might be. He recognises Pilate's power as given him from above, and perhaps St. Paul is echoing this statement when he say that the powers that be are ordained of God. Human law-courts are thus looked upon as having divine authority; the sword of justice is not borne in vain. But, though the king is to be honoured, he is not to be feared; for fear belongs to God; and honour belongs also to all men. Above all, they are not to be ashamed of the name Christian; they are to suffer anything for that.

So far, then, the Gospel allows and orders a Christian to yield obedience to the powers that be; but his obedience is not to be such as will dominate or affect the obedience he owes to the higher law within, "knowing that no man judgeth you." The Christian attitude to the law was plain and easy; it was the attitude of the law towards the Christian that was difficult. There seemed to be only two alternatives, that the Emperors

should believe in Christ, which, as Tertullian points out, is not compatible with their remaining Emperors, and the suppression of Christianity by force. The modern idea of toleration is a compromise, and it is extremely doubtful whether in a crisis it would be practical; it is only as long as no serious difference arises between them that the State and the Church can each retain its full authority. But, as it stands even to-day, the Church is a society which recognises that each individual is answerable to God before he is answerable to the State; and it is ready to defend him in that right.

As long as there exists a religion like Christianity, which claims to make a real revelation of the will of God, this conflict must arise. We see it in the case of the persecutions, and in the long conflict between Pope and Emperor in the Middle Ages; it was vital in the Reformation; it was an outstanding mark of English ecclesiastical history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and in the nineteenth we find it at the root of such struggles as the Colenso controversy. Dr. Figgis has dealt with this subject in *The Divine Right of Kings*, and *The Churches in the Modern State*, and, though he has said much which is gratifying from the church point of view, he leaves us rather in the dark as to what is to happen to the authority of the State. It will probably always remain one of the insoluble problems of politics.

The Roman Empire, finding itself up against this one rebellious member among the Churches, set itself to crush it. It had behind it all the terrors of popular opinion. Not only were the priests and the religious scandalised by those who flouted their gods and their country, but the patriot was always ready to maltreat one to whom patriotism meant so little. In addition, the most horrible libels about the Christians were in

common circulation. All these served to aggravate the hatred.

In the first place, the secrecy of their meetings was against them. They were secret of necessity; it was the very condition of their existence. Clubs or societies of any kind were unlawful; and where, under special favour and patronage of the Emperor, they were allowed to exist, meetings were limited to one a month, and business severely curtailed To exist at all, then, Christians had to exist unknown; and to this secrecy we may attribute the scantiness of our information on the most essential details of organisation. Pliny, for instance, after torturing Christians and examining apostates, seems to know nothing of baptism, the Lord's Supper, the episcopal ministry, or the sacred books.

This secrecy, first imposed as a necessity, soon became normal, and has given a distinctive character to the Christian cult. Deep mystery shrouded the baptismal confession of faith; no one, not an initiate, knew precisely what lay on the board at the Christian Mass; darkest of all was kept the nature and personnel of the Christian ministry. St. Justin, alone, of the apologists, was wise enough to rend the veil and lay bare the innocence and simplicity of the Christian worship.

What Christians seemed never to have revealed was that to the eye, ear, and touch, it was only bread and wine that lay on the table of Christ; all that reached the outside world was the terrible language of the Body broken and the Blood shed, and confused stories of a child slain sacrificially, as Jews are fabled to kill a Christian child on Good Friday. Their love-feast was thought to be a promiscuous orgy of the most unnatural passion; there was a tale of dogs who were tied to the lamp-stands; at the right moment crusts of bread were thrown to them, the lights went out, and the dark practices began. Christians heightened the

religious awe by this dreadful secrecy; but they paid for it. Tertullian would have done better by a frank statement than by his clever lawyerisms. As it was, no accusations were too terrible to be hurled at the heads of the Christians, their prophecies, their uncanny *séances*, and their power over devils.

Not only the silence, but the magnitude of the new conspiracy was appalling; it was impossible to compute the numbers, but it was known to have its representatives in all lands. It had allies among the enemies of Rome; perhaps Armenia was already a Christian country. Men of the highest rank might turn out to be Christians, and people whose lives were outwardly virtuous and respectable, even one's own friends and most trusted advisers. Any actual calculation being impossible, men were ready, in their fear, to accept the wildest and most incredible statistics. Persecution only seemed to reveal the conspiracy as still wider and more dangerous. No wonder the people of the Empire were afraid. "Enemies of the human race," "pestilent superstition" were among the common epithets hurled at them; and they did more to warrant these charges than the apologists admit. They believed that the Empire was under the dominion of devils, that society was utterly wicked, and that it was only a question of a few years before the whole world would perish in the fire of divine anger. It had had its chance of finding salvation through Christ; but, as that had failed, it was tacitly self-condemned. Christians had no sympathy with the glory and beauty of the Empire; it was simply so much fuel for burning.

Again, Christian social ideals were clean contrary to those of Rome, and this must have been profoundly disturbing to the authorities. It is true that Christians never dreamed of a revolution, or of the reformation of society; the end of all things was at hand, and the only

possible social gospel was, " Come out of her, My people." Nevertheless, they had their ideal of a city of God, " Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all." And this ideal they honestly tried to put into practice in their own communal life, a course which did more to convert society to their views than any political propaganda. Again, it must be noted that such good as was done was done unconsciously, purely by working out the principles which they believed to be right.

Jerusalem had long been swept away; but they looked back to the primitive Jerusalem Church as the very reign of the Lord on earth. This beautiful community of the relations and friends of Jesus Himself was loved and revered by every Church on earth, Hebrew or Gentile. There was zeal and faith and love, there there was perfect hospitality; they met daily in each other's houses for the prayers, the sacraments, and the communal meals. Poverty was blessed there; the rich brought their superfluous wealth and laid it at the apostles' feet for the benefit of the poor brethren, so that nobody lacked. The very apostles Peter, John, and James, the Lord's brother, were to be seen; they impressed St. Paul as the pillars of the temple of God; their teaching could be heard in the synagogues and the courts of the temple. The poor of Jerusalem heard them gladly, and it was one of the proud privileges of the Gentile churches to send up their offerings to Jerusalem so that the church there should not fail in her charity.

This, of course, looks only on the ideal side of the mother Church; but, in spite of shadows and dissensions in it, is a true picture. When the light of the world was extinguished, and the city set on a hill destroyed, allegiance was transferred to the heavenly Jerusalem, and the new temple not built with hands. Christians began

to pray more fervently for the swift coming of a new heaven and a new earth. The prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," looked forward to the return of Christ and the new Jerusalem descending from heaven like a bride. But, though the final kingdom of Christ was not yet established on this earth, the Church of those who believed on His Name and His Coming was a royal nation, a peculiar people, set apart for Him; they had a foretaste of the Spirit, they were the body and the Bride of Christ; in a true sense, they were the kingdom.

It was impossible for any other congregation to reproduce the ideal life of the Jerusalem Church; but it was possible to govern them according to the same principle. There was no nationalism or colour-line in the Church; Roman and Greek and barbarian and Scythian and Jew were all equal. There were no sex distinctions; man and woman were equal. If there was any distinction of property, it was in favour of the poor. The rich man was no longer blessed; salvation was a very difficult matter for him. Such riches as he had were to be used entirely for the benefit of the poor; poverty was the ideal state; work was a duty and a right. It was the business of the bishop to find hospitality and work for strange brethren. They lived together as a family, "having everything in common except their wives."

In later days, when the gospel precepts were no longer so universally applied, great teachers like St. Chrysostom or St. Ambrose endeavoured to recall the Church to her first love, the lady Poverty. The root of all social sins was avarice, or love of property; but property only existed as a legal fiction. Nature had lavished all her gifts as common property; robbery had made them private. If men were content with the necessities of life, social evils would disappear. For a rich man to give alms was not charity, but justice.

The amassing of huge fortunes was not praised as a virtue with such names as "enterprise" or "success"; it was regarded as a species of robbery, and came under the deadly sin of avarice. The desire to "get on," to get money, or to get power was the sin of sins. The love of money was a root of all evils.

The distinguishing and attractive mark of Christianity was the new ethic; the most frequently quoted of the words of our Lord are the commands to treat your neighbour with love. Professor von Harnack, in the *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, has described the wonderful attractive power of the Spirit of Christ; and its attractive power to some can only be equalled by the hate and fear it inspired in others. It must have appeared to the average pagan like a huge Labour Union in which the most dangerous and subversive doctrines of liberty and equality were preached; and it was knit together by the most perfect ties of mutual love. Strange as it may seem, the latter is far the more terrifying. When a trade union to-day strikes for higher wages it is likely to receive some sympathy among the governing classes; when it strikes out of sympathy to secure higher wages or better conditions for a weaker union, no words are too bad for it. "So long as thou doest well unto thyself men will speak well of thee." However good and noble they may be, society has no sympathy for those who deny the current morality of the day. To the Christians worldly success meant nothing; they had no desire for wealth, honour, or office, and, as a result, society turned on them and rent them, not only because they thought society evil, but because they held that the happiness conferred by wealth and power was illusory. True treasure was of a spiritual nature, laid up in heaven, uncorruptible by moth or rust. They were not the only people to say this; there were those who went

further, and said that all matter was evil. But they were the only people to act on it. The State—that is, society organised to defend its own interests—found Christianity its foe, as it always will.

I have dwelt on this side of the question because it is vital, and because the apologists naturally tend to pass it over; but we can see, even from them, that if the Christians made good subjects they made bad citizens. We cannot, of course, say how far abstention from public service was general, for there are three considerations that make our conclusions uncertain. In the first place, "ethic" is not a good name to apply to Christian morality, for it has no code of rules. Jesus Christ invariably laid down general principles from which the disciple was to draw his own deductions in particular cases. Entire responsibility was thrust on the individual, and, on the whole, the Church has never taken away this freedom by legislating for particular cases. Conduct is thus essentially a matter between a man's soul and the Spirit of God that is in him.

Secondly, the case is not purely civil. There were religious barriers between a Christian and the magistracy of the army. If a magistrate, it was his duty to administer the rites of the gods, and especially of the Emperor-worship; if a soldier, he had to take a pagan oath of allegiance. And, though we do find Christians in the army, we naturally rather wonder what kind of a Christian it was who took the pagan oath. We are therefore unable to say how far the objection was to the service of the Empire as such.

Thirdly, we have to remember the fact that many were converted to Christianity when already in official positions. It was the usual custom for a Christian to remain in whatever condition he occupied before his conversion. St. Paul lays down this rule in the case of marriage and slavery. Marriage is a relationship he

himself dislikes, but married converts are to remain married. Slavery is an institution quite repugnant to Christianity, yet Christian slaves and masters are to remain in their original status. Onesimus is to be received back by Philemon as a slave still, but he is to be loved as a brother.

But we wonder what sort of Christians they can have been who remained in a position in which every day might bring them a pagan duty to perform. It is quite clear, however, that we have, even in the earliest times, the two conceptions of Christianity, or rather, a variety of grades ranging from the fanatic and revolutionist who obeys no laws and has no connection with the State, to the converted official who is anxious to retain his position and emoluments. But, in spite of the uncertainty and differences of opinion, we are bound to accept as true in the main the heathen charge that the Christians took no interest in the affairs of the Empire.

An interesting example is found in Tertullian's pamphlet, *De Corona*. A Christian soldier, after doing well in the wars, has been awarded a laurel crown, which he repudiates because of its heathen associations. The result is martyrdom. Christian opinion seems to have been divided on the merits of his act. Tertullian praises it. But what troubles one, as one reads it, is the initial question of how he ever took the first *sacramentum* that made him a soldier. How could a man who had taken the *sacramentum* of Christ take the *sacramentum* of Cæsar? The average Christian would die sooner than do so, and yet this man had taken it, and then hesitated to accept the military crown. So difficult are the workings of the human mind to follow.

The view taken by Christians of military service is another difficult point. In the first place, there is the plain injunction of the Master to resist not evil, to turn

the other cheek, and to love one's enemies; but as usual, these are general principles, and it is the individual's duty to apply them in particular cases. In addition we must remember the oath of allegiance, and the fact that, by serving as a legionary, he delivered himself into the hands of the military authorities for any devil's business they chose to take in hand. It is, therefore, only natural that Christians should be unsatisfactory from the military point of view.

We see, therefore, that Christianity must have been more hostile to the Emperor than the apologists admit. There were two parties, the stricter and the laxer. During the third century, with its periods of toleration, the lax party grew to such an extent that Constantine was able at last to make peace with the Church; out of the stricter party the monastic movement was developed, with its continued antipathy to the world. In the days of Tertullian, however, the parties were not so separate; more rigid views prevailed, and he is right in saying that it would be impossible for the Emperor to be a Christian.

By this saying he gives away his case; he is asking too much in his petition for the repeal of the laws which condemn Christianity. We have seen how it would imply a recantation of the Emperor's claim to supremacy, and acquiescence in principles opposed to those on which the Empire stood. The conflict is an inevitable one, and there seems no solution; for neither State nor Church can relinquish its claim to absolute authority. And, when it comes to open war, the Church is bound to win easily, so long as it does not adopt the weapons of the State.

The State, by its very constitution, has nothing to rely on but force; Christianity, by its very name, has only one weapon, to suffer. Now force is no remedy; it does not make things one whit better; and there is a

point beyond which the most determined persecutor will not go. The Christian believed that the only way to meet this force was by suffering, and that by suffering he would really win the crown of victory and life. In this way, too, he will convert his enemy; and his enemy's good is to be his main object.

Jesus Christ was the pattern martyr. He had been hailed as Messiah, and was expected to raise an army and win His kingdom by force; but His principal care was to avoid any such appearance. On the night when He was betrayed, Peter, His right-hand man, brought two swords; he had often enough been told to depend on God alone; and, after ironically suggesting that some change was now necessary, our Lord told him that in using force, he would at least fulfil the prophecy, that enrolled Him "among the breakers of the law." When Peter actually did resist he was told to put up his sword into the sheath, on the grounds that the sword gave no security it would not also take away.

Our Lord was thus able to claim that His kingdom was not of this world; otherwise His servants would have fought. Had they fought, He would have been rightly counted as a Theudas, or a Judas, a Messiah in arms. A plucky resistance in the garden of Gethsemane would undoubtedly have brought His character nearer to the pagan ideal of a god or a man; it could easily have led to a successful rebellion, and a new Maccabæan kingdom; but a choice had now to be made between Christ and the Maccabees, and the new weapon was the cross, not the sword. Christ came to bring a sword, but it was a sword of suffering.

Christians believed that by this suffering not only was the crown of personal salvation won, but the redemption of the world was effected. Christianity was founded on the willing death of Christ; and that death was a natural culmination of a life of devotion

and self-sacrifice. Christians believed that they would be redeemed and saved by the same death, they received the baptism of His death, and drank the cup of His death; but, above all, they assimilated their lives to His, finding life through devotion, self-sacrifice, and death. And through their death they not only received the crown of life, but achieved the redemption of the world, and even of their very persecutors for whom they prayed. They filled up in their lives what was lacking of the sufferings of Christ.

Such was the Christian faith, the centre and secret of the new religion. Believing in this, they went with joy and thanksgiving to bear the atrocities committed in the name of an enlightened Emperor. It only added one more reason for the hatred of the world; the Christians had despised their glories, and now they equally despised their terrors. Nothing shifted them from their faith, their hope, their love. To the end they believed it was they who redeemed the world. And they were right. What could not be done by the Emperor of the world, the philosophy of Greece, and the gorgeous pantheisms of the East, was accomplished by the blood of the martyrs. And not till the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of God and of His Christ can this strange Warfare of Martyrdom cease.

CHAPTER VII

THE FAITH OF CHRISTIANITY

"Stand forth, O soul, in the midst, whether thou art divine and eternal as many philosophers assert, and therefore less likely to lie, or whether thou art the opposite of divine, because mortal, as Epicurus is alone in thinking, and therefore oughtest the less to lie; whether thou art received from heaven or conceived on earth; whether thou art produced from numbers or atoms; whether thou hast thy beginning from the body or art subsequently introduced into the body; whencesoever and howsoever thou makest man to be a rational being, the most capable of sense and knowledge—stand forth and utter thy testimony."—TERTULLIAN: *On the Testimony of the Soul*, i.

"Nothing evil has been created by God; we ourselves have manifested wickedness, but we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it."—TATIAN: *To the Greeks*, ii.

"If thou, too, desire this faith, first obtain the knowledge of the Father. . . . And when thou hast obtained this knowledge, with what joy, thinkest thou, wilt thou be filled? Or how wilt thou love Him Who first loved thee? Loving Him, thou wilt be an imitator of His goodness. . . . Whosoever takes up his neighbour's burden, whosoever is willing to use his superiority to benefit another who is in this respect his inferior, whosoever bestows upon the needy what he himself holds as a recipient of God's bounty . . . he is an imitator of God. Then, though thou art yet upon earth, thou shalt behold that God ruleth in heaven; then shalt thou begin to speak the mysteries of God."—*To Diognetus*, x.

"And why do you not believe? Do you not know that faith is the leading principle in all matters? For what farmer can reap unless he first trust his seed to the earth? Or who can cross the sea unless he first entrust himself to the boat and the pilot? And what sick person can be healed unless he first entrust himself to the physician? If, then, the husbandman trusts the earth, and the sailor the boat, and the sick the physician, will you not place confidence in God, even when you hold so many pledges at His hands?"—THEOPHILUS: *To Autolycus*, i. 8.

"What image of God shall I make, since, if you think rightly, man

himself is the image of God ? What temple shall I build to Him, when the whole world fashioned by His work cannot receive Him ? And when I, a man, dwell far and wide, shall I shut up the might of so great majesty in one little building ? Were it not better that He should be dedicated in our mind, consecrated in our inmost heart ? "—MINUCIUS FELIX : *Octavius*, xxxii.

VII. THE FAITH OF CHRISTIANITY

THE Apologies we have were written for two main purposes : on the one hand, they were addressed to the philosopher, and justified the Christian view of the universe ; on the other hand, they were addressed to the magistrate, and justified the existence of the Christian society. But neither Christian philosophy nor Christian organisation was Christianity ; it was only that on these sides his faith brought a Christian into conflict with the world. But the faith itself was something interior and independent ; and it was in the strength of this faith that he was ready to correct philosophies and conquer empires. He was doing far more than he knew when he confessed that Jesus was "Lord," or that Jesus was the "Son of God." For, among the many results of this faith, was a new view of the universe, and the formation of a new brotherhood.

Tertullian's *Testimony of the Soul*, and a passage in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, treat of faith from the psychological point of view, and Theophilus, in his Apology, has a section dealing with its nature. But, on the whole, it is of the deductions from this faith that they write. Yet they were slow to realise the range of these deductions. They were beginners in philosophy, to political history they were blind ; the one thing they knew for certain was that they had found salvation in Christ. No one could be certain of Stoicism or Platonism ; no one could be certain of the stability of Rome ; but, in the certitude of his faith, the Christian could

say with the blind man in St. John, " One thing I know : whereas I was blind, now I see."

We Christians know what we mean by faith ; but it seems almost impossible to explain it to an outsider. In its highest form, it is something peculiarly Christian (or Jewish), for no other religion demands it ; yet it is by virtue of the same quality, on a lower plane, that all the businesses of the world are carried on. The merely contemptuous opponent of Christianity generally dismisses it as credulity, a blind belief in the impossible. We all know Gibbon's famous sentence ; but we do not fear such enemies ; they are attacking a chimæra, they fight as one beating the air. We know, and all sympathetic people know, that faith is nothing like this, though many good Christian people give the world the excuse for thinking so.

Others attack the faith as sentimentalism. It is alleged to be grounded in emotion, and to be purely subjective. Again, many Christians have given an excuse for this charge. Not only do they regard Christianity as dependent on certain feelings, and sometimes refuse the name of Christian to those who do not experience them, but they warp the true conception of faith into a view that is magical rather than religious. They believe that God is ever about them to reward their piety and protect them from danger because they are Christians. There is no warrant for such an opinion in the pages of the New Testament.

If there is any meaning in words, it is precisely because God will not reward their piety or protect them from dangers that Christian faith has its own unique and peculiar power. The whole point is that God does not promise success, victory, miracles or religious sensations to those who trust in Him ; He only promises difficulties and persecutions. It is only under such circumstances that faith has any meaning at all. To the Christian,

the world is thoroughly murderous and dangerous; he has no illusion on that score; but he nevertheless has faith.

In the case of our Lord we see perfect and untroubled dependence on God. He is certain He is the Son of God; He constantly prays to Him; and in His most anxious moments it is this faith that carries Him through. "Not My will, but Thine be done." When the boat is near sinking on the lake, He reproaches His disciples for their lack of faith; He does not mean that they should have trusted blindly in a magical deliverance, He means that, even in the danger of death, there is no need for panic or distrust of God. This perfect attitude of trust is the essence of Sonship.

The virtue of faith was preached in the Old Testament, especially in the prophetic law-book of Deuteronomy, a favourite book of our Lord. It was taught and practised in its perfection by Him; nothing in life was worth worrying about, food or clothes or illness or death; they must trust God. Why hate an enemy? Trust in God. Why revenge a wrong? Trust in God. God, "your Father in the heavens," is the one reality to be trusted and loved. Faith is not different from love; they are only two ways of looking at the same perfect Sonship. He alone truly trusted in God; and His faith, casting out fear, carried Him triumphant and untroubled through the whole tragedy of Passion Week.

Christianity saw in Him the supreme demonstration of the meaning of the universe. In His love, faith, and self-sacrifice they saw something that was more admirable than all else the world had to show; more, this love and faith had been stronger than fear, pain, and death; and, as a pledge of this victory, had come the Resurrection. But the actual victory was not the Resurrection, but the Passion, the suffering; death,

fear, force, and pain had done their worst without being able to weaken the love and faith of the Sufferer. Love was the one thing before which hate, force, and death were powerless. The philosophers had seen the origin of the universe in Fire, Force, or Mind ; Christians found something greater than all these in the courage and love of a great man.

Moved by these considerations, and by His Resurrection and miraculous powers, they regarded Him as perfect man ; He represented the highest point of the evolution of humanity, and the strongest power in the universe. He Himself had made this claim to be the Saviour of the world. He is the pre-existent heavenly figure, the Son of Man, who is at present on earth in humiliation but is to come and hold the Last Assize as King and Judge. Even in the present age His relations with God are unique ; He forgives the sins of others (though showing no need of forgiveness Himself), heals diseases, " fulfils " the law of God, speaks with authority, and comes to men not as a servant or prophet, but as a Son from God.

No Christian dreamed of imitating this natural faith of Jesus ; their faith was something on a lower plane altogether, so that Jesus came in between as a Mediator. If we contrast His faith with that of St. Paul, we find the latter conscious of all kinds of fleshly dangers and spiritual pitfalls ; his very nature is streaked and shot with sin. It is only in Jesus we find the serene confidence and purity of heart which is able to see God, or, in so far as a Christian has it, he is sharing the faith of Jesus. By himself he cannot please God.

Faith is the energetic confidence which carries on the world ; it is an attitude of active reliance on the unseen. No man knows that he will be alive this time to-morrow, or that his circumstances will be the same ; he may be a ruined and desolate man, everything which

makes life worth living may have disappeared. He has no security of tenure in this world, yet by faith he acts as if he has. Similarly, the whole race of men may to-morrow be blotted out by famine or volcanic disaster, or by some stupendous catastrophe involving the whole universe; but, in spite of this possibility, human progress continues as if the eternity of the planet were assured. Indeed the prospect of death, even when it is very near and certain, notoriously exercises little effect on this faith of man. It is this fact which Æschylus has so clearly brought out in the myth of Prometheus; the power of foresight and forethought would have been intolerable agony without the gift of "blind hope," as he calls it.

So, also, the farmer sows in faith. He not only has no guarantee that the circle of the seasons will be the same, or that Nature will act in the same way; he has very vivid knowledge of the possibility of long droughts or undue rains, or paralysing frosts; nevertheless, he sows in faith. Similarly, every human business is grounded on faith; the sailor crosses the sea by faith, the grocer sets up his shop by faith; and one cannot even get into an omnibus except by faith. We do not know that it is really going to Kew, merely because it says so; we do not know the conductor will really tell us where to get off, but we believe it.

Our commercial system is founded on faith, and even says so; for credit means faith. If I go into a shop and buy an article, I have no guarantee that the salesman will not snatch the coin I place on the counter, and refuse to give me the article, but I believe he will not. Faith is of still greater importance in high finance, and without it all great projects, like the humblest buying and selling and bartering, would be impossible. In other words, the only real bond between men is trust; the horror of war is really that it breaks down this bond of faith,

though faith in some form must continue or peace would be for ever impossible.

The whole business of civilisation, then (quite apart from any dogmas with regard to the supernatural), depends on a certain moral attitude which Christian theology calls faith. Reason alone might occasionally convince us that the chances were in favour of the success of a project; but, however overwhelming the probabilities, it could never provide the spring of action. For, in the case of dull men who do not reason, we find the same faith acting instinctively and perhaps unconsciously; for it is a prime mistake to suppose that a man is fully conscious of the motives which make him adopt a given course of action. Underneath all his reasoning lies the ultimate assumption of faith in the consistence of the universe and the honour of his fellow-men.

From this faith springs action; men of action are men in whom this confidence is most fully developed. We have compared it above to a boy's first dive, where faith alone gives the courage to act, while reason suggests such modifications as will enable him to act wisely. Action is to faith as the fruit to the tree. In the world, this quality is generally called self-confidence; the description is in error, for the confidence is not so much in oneself as in the conviction of one's success. This conviction is quite mystical and irrational, though one is apt to draw the innocent and apparently justifiable conclusion that the success is based on one's personal qualities.

But it is only the very vulgar who repose this faith in themselves; most men of action are conscious enough of facts to place it in something vague and supernatural outside them. The lowest conception is too vague to be put into language at all; it is merely the sort of something in which the adventurer trusts to carry him

through. Next perhaps comes the conception of Luck, a superhuman force, capricious, whimsical, and yet acting in accordance with certain (arbitrary) rules, if only they could be found out. The luck of the gambler depends on the position of his chair, or the wearing of a mascot; the sailor will not go to sea on a Friday; and the Maori would not carry ambulance stretchers into battle. It is exactly the way in which a savage regards his god. But though the intellectual and moral conception is low, it is the same faith in Something as that by which all business, religious or secular, is carried on.

Stronger than this, and opposed to it, is the idea of destiny. This is seldom worked out to its logical results; for human intuition and common sense reject it as obviously false to facts. Yet it is an idea which many great men have played with; indeed it may be true that no man had been truly great without a touch of it. Napoleon believed in his star; Julius Cæsar was certain of his destiny. "Quid times? Cæsarem vehis," he said to the trembling oarsman in the storm at Dyrrhachium. And whatever we may believe about destiny, it is plain that, without this confidence, the one would not have bequeathed his name and law to France, nor the other to Rome.

While these conceptions are at least superhuman, if they are not supernatural, they are differentiated from religious faith by the fact that they are intimately connected with worldly ideals. The self-confidence of the worldly man is mere worship of success; luck is of the earth earthy; the destiny of Cæsar brings him power. The religious man dispenses with wealth, pleasure, and power; he is the artist in faith, he wants faith for faith's sake. His faith is absolute; the faith of worldly men is partial. With them it is a means to success, and becomes unnecessary as success becomes

complete; with him faith has no limits. His faith in man is absolute; his faith in God is absolute. It is warmed and inspired by love; it is tinged and coloured by hope. The worldly man, if his faith is disappointed, prefers success to faith; the religious man prefers faith even to life. "Though He kill me, yet will I trust Him," is his attitude to God and man. He is the only perfect adventurer.

The whole point of religious faith is that it is founded, not upon an illusion or an abstraction, but on a very firm rock indeed—the sense of right and wrong. There is no man who is not constantly being brought to a division in the ways of life, where duty tells him to follow one path and self-interest the other. The perplexity is a fact, and it is common to all, as is also the voice of conscience which comes with authority, telling him what he ought to do. It is a reliance on this alone which constitutes the religious attitude of faith; for it is none other than the voice of the supreme goodness. That it is there, and that it has authority, is not to be denied.

Religion is not alone in saying that it ought to be followed, for everyone follows it. But religion gives it a supremacy before which all other interests, art, science, and government, are secondary. The fact that men follow opposed paths at the call of conscience (e.g. one to war, and the other not) is a reflection of their education; the same call operates on the minds stored with different concepts; but the call is the same, for both desire peace. The Christian Church, as Sir John Seeley has pointed out, is a tutor of conscience; right conduct is dependent on the proper education of the mind as well as on faith.

"Faith is the soul's right hand; reason her left." And by prayer, sacrament, and Christian discipline, the soul is instructed more and more in the way of the

Lord. The religious creed logically involved is that of Judaism.

> "I believe in God.
> God is good,
> God wants me to be good.
> I must be good."

And further, there is revealed to us—from moment to moment, if we have ears to hear—what we ought to do, just such good works as God has prepared for us to walk in. Faith consists in following, and is justified by following. It is justified by being able to look back on a life of obedience and say, "Now I can see the meaning and purpose of all this, though it was hid from me at the time. It is a logical sequence. We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told."

By faith Abraham, when he was called, crossed the dead sands of the desert looking for a city with eternal foundations, but died a stranger on the earth; by faith Moses led the children of Israel across the howling wilderness to inhabit the land they had been promised, but died without entering it; by faith Elijah witnessed to the true God when all Israel was going after the Canaanite abominations and died almost alone; by faith Jeremiah spoke the truth of God when the Babylonian was at the gate and corruption was within, but was carried away to Egypt, and never saw his words come true; by faith Jerusalem was built again, and defended by the steadfast Maccabæan martyrs; by faith Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of a new temple not made with hands, and gave up His body to the death of the cross, trusting to God thus to bring it in; by faith the apostles preached the Resurrection, and by faith St. Paul carried the gospel to the farthest bounds of the West, and died for it in Rome; by faith St. Justin and all the noble

armies of martyrs washed their robes in blood, and entered the heavenly city; by faith the good news was handed down, and by faith, and faith alone, we follow Him to-day, an incredible number throughout the whole world.

Surely also, we may add, by faith Marconi invented the wireless telegraph; by faith Keats gave his poetry to the critics to mangle; by faith Robert Owen laboured to improve his factories; by faith Tom Paine urged on the American and French Revolutions; by faith General Joffre rolled back the armies on the Marne. Yet all these were labouring for a visible success on earth; the result seemed to them so fair that it justified the faith. To the religious man the faith is so fair that it justifies the risk. Love of God and man, faith in God and man, hope in God and man, are so beautiful that, for their sake, he will risk the hate and persecution of the world, and hope in them for the good time coming.

This moral attitude is the attitude Christianity calls faith; but it is pinned to a confession of the Lordship of Christ. The situation is that all these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar . . . but God has provided some better thing concerning us. All nations of men "seek after God if haply they may feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from every one of us." But we Christians know what we believe. In the clear words of our Lord, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which ye see and have not seen them."

In other words, Christianity accepts the Jewish belief that God is the real ground of all confidence and faith. "Some put their trust in horses, and some in chariots," and some, we might add, in riches, and some in organisation, "but we will remember the Name of the Lord

our God." It regards the life of Jesus Christ on earth as the fullest revelation of His personality, Who also created the world and Who speaks in secret to the soul. They no longer trusted in wealth or power; and their faith in God and man was summed up in faith in Jesus Christ, Who is both God and man.

Jesus Christ was a full, absolute, and final revelation of the person and character of God. His life does not provide complete and convincing evidence of the meaning of the universe, the purpose of pain, the origin of sin, the survival of personality beyond the grave, or any similar problem, though the Christian will find they cease to worry him as they did before. All are to be solved, not by an intellectual theory, but by trust in Jesus Christ, trust, not in the poor body that was nailed to the cross, but in the glorious and heavenly Spirit Who animated it.

Faith in Jesus is not intellectual; it is an act of the whole man, and intellect plays only its proper and subordinate part. The manner, for instance, in which a man chooses and trusts his wife is not intellectual, though the intellect plays its part. He believes in her, he trusts her; but he cannot really prove her reliability to one who does not want to believe it. In every sphere of life, we find personal relation built on the same faith, whether it be that of friend and friend, master and man, or man and wife. The reasons for this faith are incommunicable; they rest on personal relations deeper than intellect, and deeper than words; but as time goes on, experience makes the faith and trust still stronger. And, in exactly the same way, Christian faith, though it bring hate, persecution, and worldly disaster, justifies itself, as it goes on, in a way which one finds hard to describe.

This does not mean that we are to neglect the intellectual side of the Christian faith; intellect may be an

important obstacle or help in bringing a man to Christ. The arguments are mainly on the side of Christianity. Only the Christian hypothesis can satisfactorily explain the life of our Lord, the belief of the early Church, the Christology of St. Paul, the faith of the martyrs, and the triumph of Christianity. Only the Christian hypothesis can explain the fact that it is flourishing vigorously to-day. The newspapers largely ignore it; the histories largely omit it; the psychologist, the materialist, the student gather round to explain it; but it goes on. Each of the critics produces a theory which is perfectly satisfactory to himself, if not to the others; the expurgation of fact necessary to make the theory fit the documents is always due to "critical investigations," not to the presuppositions of the investigator. Schweitzer's *Von Reimarus zu Wrede,* is a melancholy procession of ghosts: "The five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come."

I have dwelt at length on the meaning of faith, because it is the living centre of the religion which the apologists were trying to justify to the world. They do not deal with the faith itself so much as with its immediate implications. In defending these corollaries of the faith they were, of course, defending the faith itself; but the defence of these corollaries is not in itself likely to convince men of the truth of Christianity. It can only clear the way. The central work of the Church on earth is the guardianship of the good confession of this faith, always expressed in the form of words used at baptism.

The number of corollaries which follow from this central belief is very important. In the first place, this Jesus appeared at a certain time and place; He has a position in the orderly progress of history. Further, He was expected; the Jews had long been looking for a day when a great man would arise from their

race and show the world what God meant. They believed that God had revealed the nature of this "Messiah" to their prophets. Jesus accepted this view, though, on investigation, He is found to have interpreted their writings in a different way from His predecessors, or even His followers. It was necessary, therefore, to preach Jesus as Christ—that is, as the culminating point of Hebrew history; nothing could be more welcome to the modern evolutionary mind, and further investigation promises to place Jesus in His true relation to the world-crisis of that age.

Secondly, the science of the day had a reasonable and philosophical view of the universe. Men were deeply conscious of an order and law which obviously upheld it; and they had no mean knowledge of astronomy and mathematics. Among educated men an evolutionary hypothesis was held as to the origin of the world; to this reasonable order of evolution the Stoics gave the name Logos. The Christian method of insisting on Jesus Christ as the revelation of the creating God was to identify Him with this Logos.

Thirdly, the philosophers had seen no such order in humanity: everything was astray there, and difficult to explain. The general theory was that only the educated were really worth considering men at all; women, slaves, and artisans were soulless beings, necessary to keep the educated alive. Christianity could not despise the condition of subjection which Jesus had assumed; all humanity was, to them, a part of this divine order, but it had been wrecked by sin, the failure of human free-will. The only remedy was faith in Christ and reincorporation in that ideal humanity to which we all belong.

Fourthly, it naturally involved obedience to His words. Even in His lifetime His words were regarded as having authority; He ventured to improve on

words then regarded as having divine authority; and Christians gave His words an authority equal to that of God. Chief among these was the new morality, the attitude of unfailing love and trust in all men. The logical ground of this was the undoubted fact that God gives equal benefits of sun and rain to all; for men this is a council of perfection, but perfection is required of them. They are not to judge or discriminate in their love.

Fifthly, it involved joining a brotherhood which He had founded, and observing the two sacraments of Washing and Eating on which He had laid such great stress; thus Christianity became a definite force in history, not a mere idea. Jesus had appointed Twelve to be with Him, and to wield all those powers over the spirits of evil which He Himself had wielded in the Spirit of God. After the Resurrection the Christian brotherhood found its centre in them, and the Holy Spirit was given by them with the imposition of hands; connection with an apostle was a guarantee of the genuineness of a teacher or minister. The Christian Brotherhood met for worship and sacrament; but of equal importance was the business of hospitality and poor relief. For, in obedience to gospel commands, they lived as a family, and each man's property was only his to administer to others. In this community the risen and invisible Christ reigned as Emperor.

Sixthly, there was speculation, and hence a beginning of theology; Christian theology seems to have been mainly a result of the existence of heresy. It is a common remark of non-Christian historians that orthodoxy is a later development than heresy, e.g. that the first three centuries were Arian. It is true that heretical teaching nearly always comes first, and that the Church is bound in self-defence to formulate something in the nature of a test. By heresy is meant any teach-

ing which strikes at the eternal and cosmic Lordship of Christ. The confession of the Lordship is enough to make a Christian; but, if he is going to publish a philosophy of his faith, he must not hold ideas which the long experience of the Church has shown to be dangerous.

Seventhly, since personality, and therefore morality, is the key to the universe, there must inevitably be a division between the good and the bad. Man is incapable of deciding and judging which is good and which is bad, and furthermore there is, to the last, hope of repentance. But deeply engraved on the Christian imagination is the picture of the Last Judgment; the exact meaning of the terrible words used by our Lord is not clear, and I do not think they were meant to be clear: for Christianity gives us faith, not knowledge, as to the unseen. Every picture is lit up with the red flames of a ruined world; there is a thunder of angel wings and of saints coming to judgment. Jesus Himself is the strict Judge whose love is never weakened into sentiment; there is a company of saints in glory; there is the long line of failures departing from the Presence.

"Lacrymosa dies illa
Qua resurgat e favilla
Iudicandus homo reus;
Huic ergo parce deus
Pie Jesu Domine
Dona eis requiê."

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN THOUGHT

" It is no strange message that I preach, no unreasonable argument that I pursue; but, having learned from the apostles, I am now become a teacher of all nations, and what was once delivered to me I now minister to those who become worthy disciples of the truth. . . . This is He who was from the beginning, who appeared afresh and was found to be ancient, and is ever being born new in the hearts of the saints."—*To Diognetus*, xi.

" When the soul comes to herself as from a debauch or after sleep or a fit of sickness and recovers her health and reflection, she has recourse to the name of God and invokes Him by the single name of ' God.' "—TERTULLIAN : *Apology*, xvii.

" That which you reproach in us as stubbornness has been the most instructing mistress in proselytising the world, for who has not been struck at the sight of that you call stubbornness, and from thence pushed on to look into the reality and reason of it ? And who ever looked well into our religion, but came over to it ? And who ever came over to it, but was ready to suffer for it ? "—TERTULLIAN : *Apology*, i.

" We enter on our defence not in the popular way, by begging your favour, and moving your compassion, because we know the state of our religion too well to wonder at our usage. The truth we profess we know to be a stranger upon earth, and she expects not friends in a strange land ; but she came from heaven, and her abode is there, and there are all our hopes, all our friends, and all our preferments."—TERTULLIAN : *Apology*, i.

" These things, O Greeks, I, Tatian, a disciple of the barbarian philosophy, have composed for you. I was born in the land of the Assyrians, having been first instructed in your doctrines, and afterwards in those which I now undertake to proclaim. Henceforward, knowing who God is and what is His work, I present myself to you prepared for an examination concerning my doctrines, while I adhere immovably to that mode of life which is according to God."—TATIAN : *To the Greeks*, xlii.

" When Octavius had brought his speech to a close, for some time

we were struck into silence, and our countenances fixed in attention; and, as for me, I was lost in the greatness of my admiration that he had so adorned those things which it is easier to feel than to say, both by arguments and by examples, and by authorities derived from reading; and that he had repelled the malevolent objectors with the very weapons of the philosophers with which they are armed, and had moreover shown the truth, not only as easy, but also as agreeable."—MINUCIUS FELIX: *Octavius*, xxxix.

VIII. CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN THOUGHT

IN gathering up the strings of what we have been saying, and making what few suggestions may strike us in the light of modern thought, it is necessary to deal rather with the common conceptions in normally educated circles than with the theoretica of the professional scholar. This is not said in any kind of disparagement of the work of scholars; but we have seen that the apologists were not really concerned with anything of this kind, but with the broad conceptions which were the common property of normally educated circles in the Empire. We do not find that they ever dealt seriously with the Stoic theology; what we find is, that they realised and appreciated some of the main Stoic conceptions. They were well read in pagan literature, but they were content to use their learning only as an auxiliary to their main purpose.

On looking at the world to-day, we are astonished to find how like secular thought is to that of the second century, but how much Christianity has developed. It was then in a fluid, or, at any rate, plastic, condition; as an intellectual system it scarcely existed. Since then there have been many contests with heresies, and the faith has slowly broadened into the intellectual confession we know to-day. It is next to impossible for a Christian to disentangle the content of his living faith from the creed in which it is contained. In his heart

he holds the faith of the first century; with his mouth he speaks the creed-formulas which subsequent ages have evolved for him to defend it; with his intellect he cannot disentangle the two.

These formulas have been evolved in many centuries by a kind of natural selection. Such words were added to the creed as best defended it from the assaults of the heretics; and each one is an ancient weapon, a battle-sword tested in the war with paganism. Believing as we do that the Church was guided by the Holy Spirit, we can only treat these formulas with the greatest reverence; but, as we believe that the Holy Spirit is still with us, we cannot deny ourselves the right or duty of phrase-making or phrase-altering. But the only possible reason for discarding a phrase is that it does not accurately defend a point vital to the Christian faith; the object of a creed is to keep off attacks on the supreme and cosmic Lordship of Christ. And in her age-long experience the Church has found that many innocent-looking positions strike at the root of that Lordship.

It is obviously no part of the average Christian's business to question the creeds which have come down to him with the sanction of twenty centuries of Christianity behind them; while it plainly is the part of the Christian scholar to appreciate the fundamental truth which lies behind each phrase, and, in his apologetic, to defend the truth rather than the phrase. It is also his duty to evolve such phraseology as will make the truth readily acceptable to the modern mind. He has before him the same task as the apologists, with the advantage of Christian history as an object lesson, and, if he follows their example, he will be extremely bold in capturing every true modern thought as a new province for the empire of Christ.

It was through lack of this spirit that the Church let the world break loose at the Reformation; and a return

to Latin and Greek models has produced in the end an age not so unlike that of the Antonines. The outstanding difference lies in the accomplishments of physical science. The eighteenth century had accepted, as a law, the idea of the cast-iron uniformity of nature; but, as the nineteenth century dawned, many observers and speculators came to the startling conclusion that the world was moving, that by itself it was slowly progressing from past to future, from species to species, from good to good. The work of Lyall, Darwin, and Wallace proved, as far as proof was possible, that this was a fact.

The magnitude of the discovery is already obscured to us of the twentieth century by our utter unfamiliarity with any other theory than that of Evolution; but its novelty at the time is proved by the fierce opposition it met, not only from old-fashioned ecclesiastics but from old-fashioned scientists. On the other hand, Materialism saw in it a new and powerful ally, and desperate efforts were made to explain all moral and biological progress as a result of material causes. This materialism went further than Darwin, and was directly contrary to Wallace. Samuel Butler was the pioneer of the distinguished band who have since opposed it. It is now giving way to the new theory that the universe is not merely moving, but living. There is life in the universe, feeling out now this way, now that, to express itself, and moulding matter to its purpose. More than this, matter is no longer dead inert "stuff," but self-manifesting vibration of a strong and subtle element.

Nevertheless, one conception has sunk deep into our consciousness; we believe in the consistent evolution of the universe according to immutable law. We scarcely even allow nature any freaks or sports; in one way or another, everything is to be explained by evolu-

tion. In a little while we shall be able to explain this or that; we stand tip-toe upon the edge of countless discoveries. There is no need for a miracle; now, more than ever, we believe that miracles do not happen: they would break the law of nature.

It is unfortunate for scientists that, just as they stand with new gates opening before them, they should suffer from precisely the same misfortune as the Church. Men cling to such words as "evolution" and "law" as Christians often cling to the creeds or the gospel, without any apprehension of the real meaning of the fact which lies behind each, or of the elucidations of science as they slowly grow to perfection; and as science moves forward the world is left behind. It has grown bored with trains and motor-cars; it will soon grow bored with aeroplanes. It is certain that the word "evolution" has explained everything, and one naturally feels no further interest. And the conception of the automatic universe bites deeper and deeper year by year into the subconsciousness of the race.

This view of the universe is accepted by a whole school of Christian critics. The universe is a machine, and God is somehow locked into it, or locked out, according to one's philosophy. He cannot alter it; He is like us, chained to the wheel. Science cannot change water into wine; therefore it follows that He who made water cannot. He cannot raise a body from the dead; He cannot spiritualise that body; He cannot raise it in the air, or make it walk on the water. Now, all these things are impossible to flesh and blood, but science has no way of finding out whether they are impossible with God. We cannot make any *a priori* statements as to what God cannot or will not do.

If, then, the Christian interpretation of the gospel story is under consideration, we must protest against

an appeal to the authority of scholars whose whole work is conditioned by a denial of miracle. Their work possesses value for those who agree with them, but none for the Christian, and none for the impartial investigator; and this is true whether the scholar in question is a "rationalist" outside the Church, or a Christian theologian, anxious to preserve the "true humanity of our Lord." Great care is also to be taken with those scholars whose conception of law is partially modified by Christianity, and whose conception of Christianity is partially modified by their conception of law; who, to effect a *rapprochement*, are ready to bind the Deity in lighter chains, and are willing to accept miracle where it can be found to fit in with the peculiar ways of thinking of the modern mind.

The apologists began from the beginning, and set their opponents right about the nature of God and the universe. God is not bound by the material laws that bind us; He can do what He likes. They began neither with the gospel nor with Abraham; they went right back into eternity and taught a new doctrine of the nature of God. They insisted on His personality, His goodness, His impartial love, His coming day of judgment, on the fact that the universe was made to please Him.

This is our main duty to-day. Our system of psychology or metaphysic is not of equal importance and it is not part of our duty or even our right to call in question the generalisations which science has laid down with regard to the observed uniformity of nature. It is our duty to insist in season and out of season on the sovereignty of the moral Person who rules the universe, of whose freedom, goodness, and love we are assured in the Holy Passion of His Son our Lord, and, following the lead of the apologists, we must claim as His the whole order and beauty of evolution as far as

science has been able to unroll it. It is our duty, of course, very carefully to scrutinise what is put before us, and separate real knowledge from questionable deduction. And we must picture the progress of the universe as the making of a theatre in which the drama of will has worked itself out, so as to culminate in the tragedy of the cross. Our apologetic must lead up, as before, to a newer and more satisfactory Origenistic scheme in which morality is the clue to faith, and faith the clue to the unseen.

When we look at the latest development of modern thought we see much that seems to run parallel to this; there is a reaction against the established order of materialism. Modern thought, art and poetry, science and music, is renouncing the old ideas of law, and using terms like "life," "force," "will," "God," or even "Christ." But though each in its own department is for life against mechanism, it is still nevertheless true that the background of their thought remains materialistic. But the prophets are, as so often happens, the forerunners of the thinkers.

Undoubtedly the most commanding intellectual figure in England to-day is that of George Bernard Shaw; no other English writer has obtained the same European importance. He is distinguished as the last of the great Victorians by his conscientious and honest examination of all the great problems, an examination he carries on with the crusading thoroughness of a Ruskin; such an honourable facing of the whole universe is all too rare now. At the same time, Mr. Shaw faces it from quite a modern (rather than a Victorian) point of view, but with the idea of getting results that are not so much modern as true; and the outstanding feature of his philosophy is his explanation of the universe as a manifestation of will. Now we Christians also believe that the universe is the manifestation of a will,

and that it culminated in the Incarnation of our Superman, Jesus Christ.

After all, rationalist evolution had always been a pedantic theory of the universe, and it came as a breath of fresh air when Mr. Shaw animated it with Nietzsche's conception of Will, when the universe was permitted to have not only force behind it, but life and personality. It is true that Mr. Shaw's conception of personality is defective, and that his pathetic picture of a helpless baby-god growing into consciousness and power does not satisfy either logic or common sense. Development or growth without some unchanging standard, background, or medium is inconceivable. No motion is possible unless something is fixed; no progress is possible unless something is changeless; time is not possible without eternity. But the point is that a great man of the modern world has realised that the universe can only be explained by will.

Men must advance to the next degree of truth as soon as it is presented to them, and men must therefore follow Mr. Shaw. After that, it is only a question of time before the Will of the World is identified with the eternal and the infinite, and men will believe again in God. Perhaps a hundred years will be spent in searching blind alleys, before modern thought has quite found out the insufficiency of Gnostic gods who are of this world worldly. Mr. Wells's *God the Invisible King* is so rashly and hastily sketched in—perhaps because of its very genuineness—that its insufficiency is obvious. Other attempts may be more plausible and more successful, but such success cannot last. Nothing but the infinite God can satisfy the soul; we will not be put off with one who is only the prince of this world. The soul must have, and will get, the Everlasting God; and when it comes to Him, it will come to Him through Jesus Christ, difficult though the surrender will be.

I have chosen Mr. Shaw, not because he was the first person to think of the theory, but because he is a representative man, and in him we find exactly the position of the modern world : it is honest enough to avow the attraction of Jesus, but on no account will it bow its proud neck to the yoke of humility and the Incarnation. Whether it be the scientist believing in evolution or the *élan vital*, or whether it be the new religionist, with his enthusiasm for life, spirit, nature, or art, the narrow way of Jesus is too narrow, and submission is too hateful a loss of freedom. Yet now, if ever, it is only the Christian belief which will explain the facts ; there is no other way of accounting for the sequence, David, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, Justin. It simply has not been done ; Christianity has been left out.

It is not a very daring forecast to make, that the new spirit will eventually break up the old mechanical theory ; the intellect by itself is bankrupt, and we are beginning to realise that it cannot solve all the mysteries of life. Not only will art and conduct be given a more important place, but there will be a revival of belief in the supernatural. As the containing hold of law and reason is withdrawn from the mind, we are likely to see it burst out in a thousand fantastic shapes, the nature of which our studies in second-century religion will help us to understand. Theosophy and Spiritualism will give us glimpses of this coming age of superstition. But, like the strange growths of that century, they must inevitably die away ; for they have no moral or intellectual stabilising power. Christianity is the one rock to stand firm.

Our task will be the eternal task of defending the cosmic Lordship of Christ ; for this belief alone remains while empires and philosophies rise and pass. Marcus Aurelius believed in a regulated world of law and order ; but his cold and reasoned philosophy was powerless

in face of the real needs and nature of man. No dynasty succeeded his, till the dynasty of Constantine arose. Fifty years after his death the Syrian Emperors were rendering fashionable what was at the best a superstitious and sentimental religiosity; but this, having no root, withered away. By the end of the third century Christianity was obviously the victor, because it witnessed even unto death to its Master.

It is for this reason I have not dealt with the controversies as to miracle, the Resurrection, or the Virgin Birth, as they do not seem, in the face of the great moral issues, to be of vital importance. They have long lost their freshness, and the modern mind is singularly little accustomed to be worried by them; if Jesus is God, we are not going to object to miracles.

We come now to the condition of the Church; and here, we must feel, is a tremendous change from the age of the apologists. We see that the beautiful ethic of equality and love is scarcely even reflected in the Church of to-day; the deep and catastrophic divisions of modern society have driven great chasms through it, dividing it into sects, castes, classes, and nations. Were it not for the beginning of repentance and the dawn of hope, there would be ground, humanly speaking, to despair of the Church. But, while there are still some who believe we have nothing to repent of, the many are sure there is something wrong somewhere, and some find it a stumbling-block.

The last century has seen a revival in religion at least as amazing as the great progress in science; for in the year 1800 a man might have predicted the scientific, but scarcely the religious movements of the century. Christianity was morally, socially, and intellectually discredited; the Church of England was folding her robes to die with what decency she could, and it was already being suggested in Parliament that these foolish

ordinations should cease. Under the blows of her antagonists Christianity visibly tottered. Nevertheless, there was a real renascence of Christianity, the old faith began to burn again with a strange certitude, and the two English Universities became homes of spiritual activity. It was also an age of missionary activity, rivalling the age of St. Peter and St. Paul; and all along the line it was the traditional religion that was gaining ground.

One hundred years ago the Church of England counted almost the whole nation among her adherents, and she was their pastor, by virtue of her "establishment." To-day establishment remains as a legal link between Church and State, but the congregations of nominal and conventional Christians have largely melted away. The great body of the people stands outside the Church, and is probably not less religious for it. The gain to the Church is immense, and as the sifting continues she will grow in spiritual vigour. Accepting only the Lordship of Christ, she will exist for the purpose of guarding that faith. And everywhere are to be found small bodies of men and women, united in their loyalty to Him and ready to follow. We cannot see where He will lead us, but we are certain of our faith, and can follow.

The practice of the gospel ethic will naturally flow from this allegiance. After all the valuable work of the critics we may hope for a good and popular account of the life and teaching of Jesus. Such a work, by strengthening the Church, and satisfying the inquirer, would perhaps be the most valuable contribution to a present-day apologetic. The apparent contrast between the life of Jesus and that of His followers is, and always will be, the great obstacle to the faith. With deeper faith and a purer Church we may expect a revival of greater intensity even than that of the last

century; and of this we have a foretaste in many a congregation.

History knows no other method of being a Christian than that of joining the fellowship; individual Christianity is an impossibility. And, if the past is any guide to the future, we must expect that an invigorated Church will come into collision with the State. In as far as the latter represents the community as organised to defend its own interests, it is bound on some occasions to be opposed to Christianity; and in as far as it reflects current moral, social, or religious ideas, it is likely to be at variance with the highest revelation. The gospel prohibition of divorce, and the compulsory state-education of children are among the burning questions. War and pacifism will continue to provoke controversy; and questions like Socialism and Syndicalism will be of importance owing to their close connection and resemblance with Christian social morality.

Among all these it will be difficult to steer a safe course, and the best guide will still be the Catholic principle that, while a Christian must be a good subject and obey the law, he must also remember his allegiance to a celestial and infallible Emperor, and to the principles which he must never desert. Christianity has no message of salvation for a state other than that men should love one another; but she cannot be indifferent to social reform. What was impossible in the Roman Empire is in the air now, and no one supposes that it is the duty of the Church to pass by on the other side. The Church itself, however, can best serve the nation by preaching and practising the idea of a kingdom in heaven, leaving to individuals the right to practise the prophetic gift of suggesting or determining policy.

The Church has been far too hesitative in her apologetic. She has been dominated by the idea of making

her message acceptable to modern thought, a method which never succeeds in practice. Christianity is something quite different from any kind of thought, ancient or modern; the leap of faith is as difficult for one age as it is for the next, but the leap is the only thing. Clean self-abandonment to Christ is the one thing needful; and nothing can be done to make this less a casting away of one's soul, a rebirth into life.

Very sympathetically and carefully must the Church deal with her estranged children, whether they be dutiful, careless, or rebellious; she must appreciate all they have done by themselves and sanctify it by the knowledge of her faith. All the broken and opposite faiths of to-day have a rightness in them as far as they go; each is struggling towards the light of the Logos, the Way of Truth and Life. They are wandering children, losing themselves in the dark, and fighting among themselves sometimes; and they must be shown that they will find all they want if they do but trust to Christ —and jump! It is only in His faith that we shall find the peace that quite passes understanding, eternal peace and light perpetual.

Nothing can explain the peace of the Christian faith but to have experienced it. Christ stands in the midst of the world with a hand stretched out to all; in Him is the supreme Truth, the supreme Wisdom, the supreme Goodness, the supreme Adventure—He is Life, Power, Grace, Evolution, the Superman—Son of God and Son of Man. It is to us Christians that all the gates of the earth stand open; it is we who welcome all new knowledge and beauty and conduct; our heart is fuller of words than ever we can speak. It is to us alone that each new phase of thought or life means something; for each is a street in the city of God. It is we who unite into one heavenly order all the experiences and

æsthetics of the world. To us alone they are not fragmentary, abrupt, discordant, enigmatic. Surely the champions of modern thought ought to make peace in their own camp before they come to offer terms to Christianity. Perhaps, after all, we shall have to do it for them.

THE END

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Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

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